

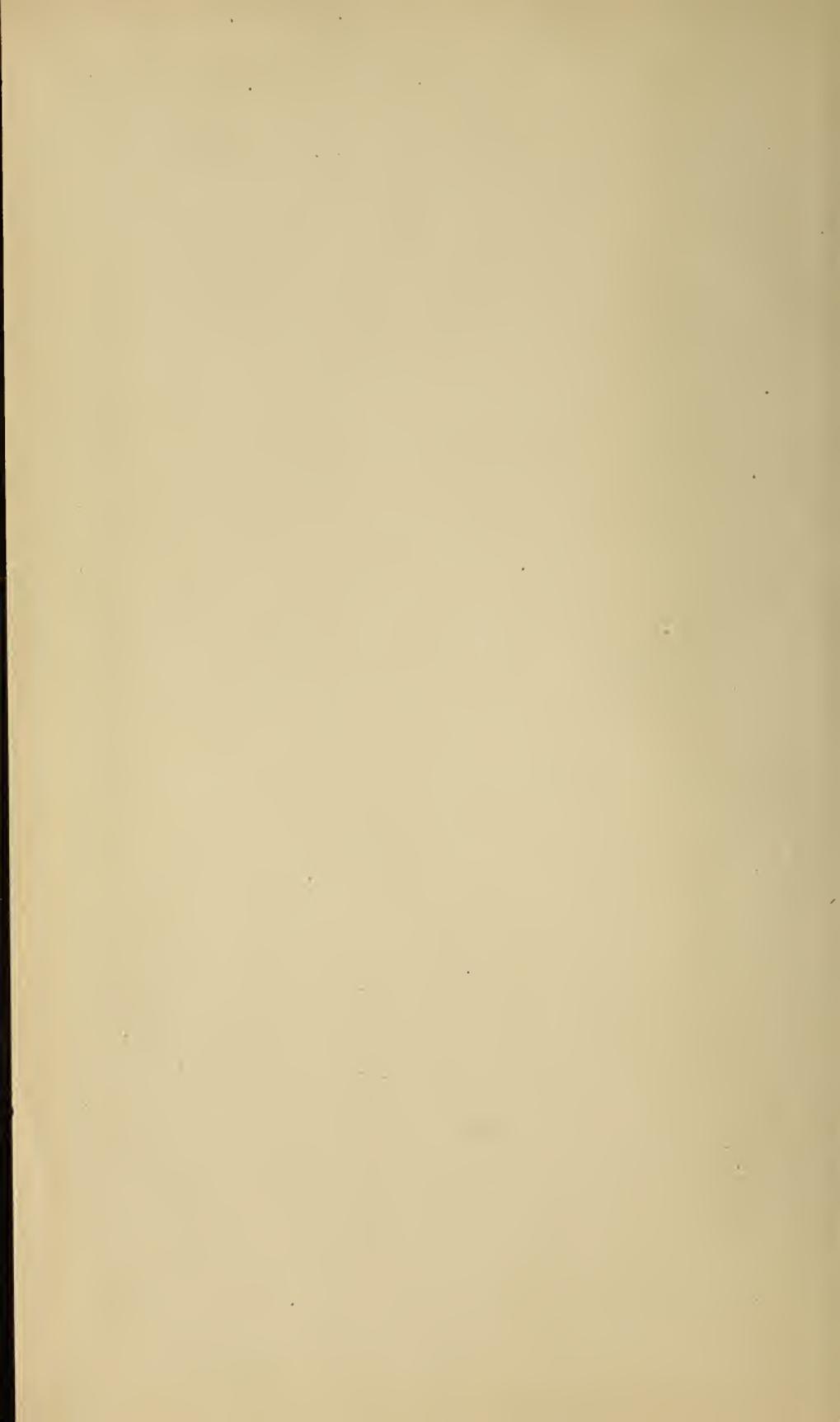


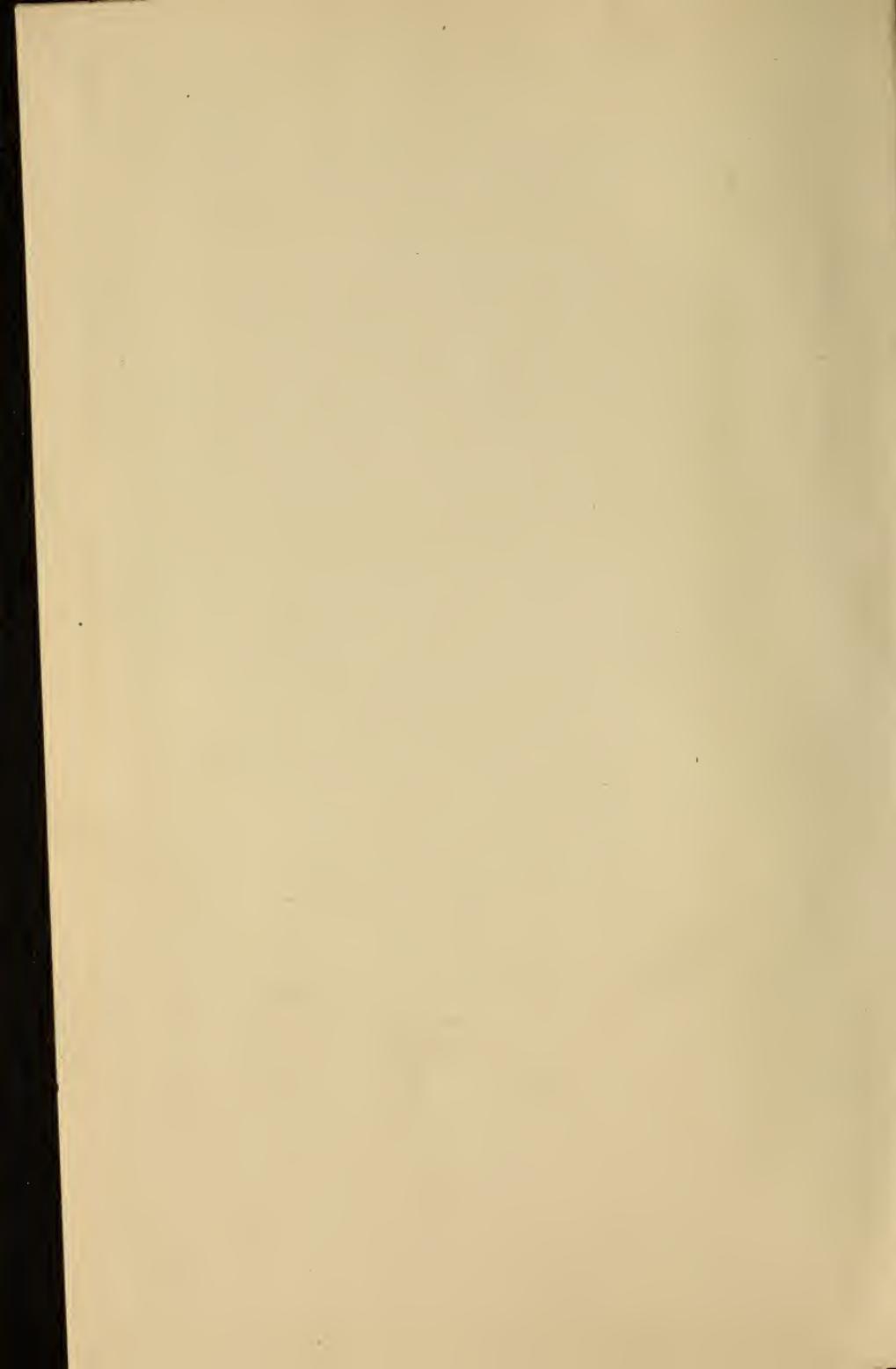
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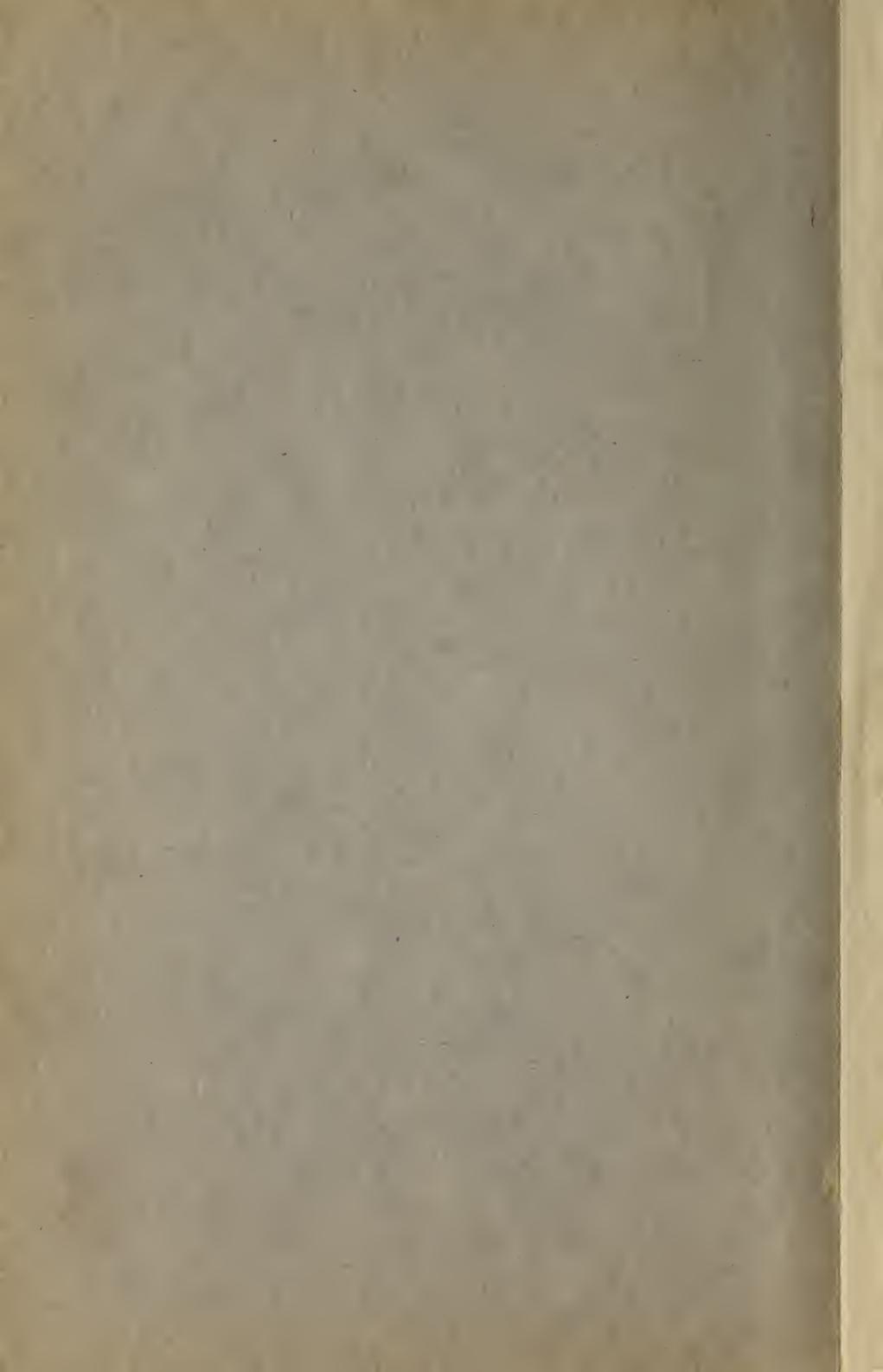
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GREAT THINGS
OF THE BIBLE

O. A. NEWLIN, D.D.



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1998

Great Things of the Bible

Great Things of the Bible

Sunday Morning Messages

By

O. A. NEWLIN, D. D.
Author of
"STRANGERS TO GOD"



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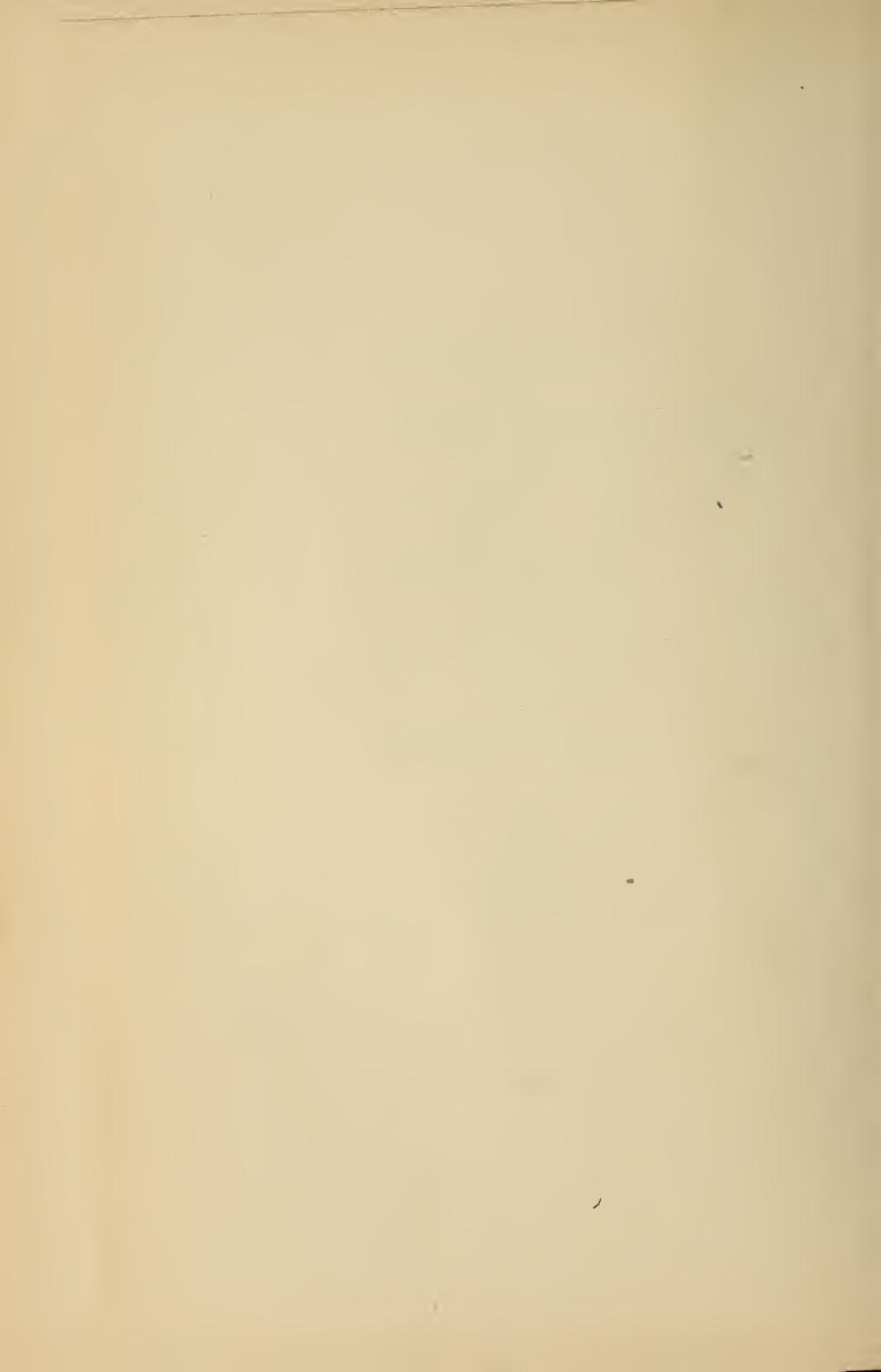
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To

THE THOUSANDS WHO LOVE THE WORD OF GOD
AND WHO, AFTER HEARING THESE MESS-
AGES, FIND NEW DELIGHT IN SEARCH-
ING THE SCRIPTURE DILIGENTLY,
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTION-
ATELY DEDICATED.

C O N T E N T S

I	GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE	9
II	THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST	24
III	THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL	40
IV	THE DIAMOND NECKLACE	56
V	TWO PICTURES IN ONE FRAME	71
VI	ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL	68
VII	THE TRIUMPHAL CLIMAX	102
VIII	THE PATH OF THE JUST	118
IX	THE HALFWAY HOUSE	133
X	THE STANDARD OF A CHRISTIAN	148
XI	CHRISTIAN POISE	163
XII	LOST OPPORTUNITIES	179
XIII	THE WINNING CHURCH	194
XIV	SAFEGUARDS OF SOCIETY	209
XV	RELIGION IN THE HOME	224



I

GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

*“I have written to him the great things of my Law,
but they were counted as a strange thing.”*

—Hosea, viii: 12.

The Bible is a rich mine containing five veins. Just below the surface is the vein of historical facts; even some infidels have gone to this depth and admit its literary dignity and accurate record of events. A little further beneath the surface is the deposit of ethical truth; moral men have gone to this depth and have appropriated some of its high ideals. The richest vein of this mine is somewhat deeper and contains the deposit of spiritual truth; all true followers of the Lord have gone down to this stratum and have become possessors of “The Pearl of Great Price”. Just below this is the vein of typical truth; not a few have reached this layer and tell us of its grandeur. The deepest vein contains the deposit of dispensational truth; comparatively few have penetrated the rock overlaying this deposit and opened to us its treasure. All who take the elevator of Faith down the shaft of Research and survey the strata of this mine find abundant evidence that these “great things” which some have “counted as a strange thing” constitute the Divine, Infallible and Transforming Book.

I. THE DIVINE BOOK.

Behold the Bible! The Book of which God claims the authorship. Manifold are the evidences to substantiate that claim. He used as writers kings and fishermen, philosophers and herdsmen, poets and tentmakers, statesmen and tax gatherers; men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon and trained at the feet of the rabbis in Jerusalem. The authorship of this Book is wonderful beyond that of all other books. It is not the product of one age but of the ages. The writers were widely separated by time and distance, with no thought of what particular place their work was to occupy. The plan was of God. He was two thousand years preparing for its appearance and fifteen hundred years more in having it written. Other books become out of date, but this one lives on through the ages, keeping abreast of the keenest intellects. It is marvelous that sixty-six books, which tell consistently the variations of a single story, were collected in one, and survived intact the wreck of ancient literature. Collusion on the part of the writers was impossible. There was no human design in its preservation, for kingdoms and empires were destroyed and with them many carefully gathered libraries, yet this Book lived on, making its way against the tide of fiercest opposition. You might as well throw the alphabet over a sheet of paper on the sidewalk and expect to pick up the Declaration of Independence as to expect the Bible to take form

and survive without the design of God being back of it all.

The Bible may be likened to a magnificent temple with sixty-six majestic chambers, more glorious than Solomon's temple with its hewn stone, its pillars of cedar, doors of olive and ceilings overlaid with fine gold. This temple was fifteen centuries in building, and the monogram of its Divine Architect is indelibly engraved on each of the eleven hundred eighty-nine chapters which comprise its imposing beams, pillars and panels. The approach to this stately temple is by the tranquil garden of Eden with its gorgeous flowers and lucid streams. Over the antique entrance is written "Chambers of Law and Justice". The first of these chambers is an elaborate vestibule to the remaining four. It resembles a long gallery hung with portraits and pictorial scenes of surpassing interest, such as Paradise and the Flood, the Flaming Cities of the Plain, the Offering of Isaac, Rebecca at the Well, and the Governor of Egypt weeping on the neck of his brethren. From here we pass to the "Chambers of Historic Record", twelve extensive apartments, reaching from Joshua to Esther. These comprise the library of the edifice in which the sins and sacrifices of a thousand years are chronicled. Next is the "Gymnasium" of the building, or the saints' exercising ground, where Job makes a home run with the odds decidedly against him. Then we enter the "Conservatory" of the Psalms, where the superb orchestra with cymbal, trumpet, psaltery and

12 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

harp charms us with the variations of the Oratorio of Life. Adjoining this is the "Banquet Hall", where, seated beneath banners of love, we may partake of Wisdom's Feast and enjoy the after-dinner speeches recorded in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Songs of Solomon. From here we pass to the "Chambers of Prophecy"; seventeen stately halls in grand succession from Isaiah to Malachi, in which are many Messianic tablets directing in unison to the more modern portion of the Temple, where we may see the Princely Son of the Palace.

Crossing the shadowy court with expectant hearts, we hear the angelic annunciation and enter the "Royal Chambers", where we meet the promised Messiah. On the walls of these chambers we see not golden reliefs of palm trees but four full length portraits drawn by the Holy Spirit's inimitable hand, of One "Chiefest among ten thousand" and "altogether lovely". We pass at once into the "Chamber of Celestial Mechanics", where we hear the reverberating sounds of machinery in this work room of the building, the Book of Acts. Then we enter the stately halls of the "Apostolic Epistles". The golden doors of fourteen of these bear the inscription, "The Honorable Apostle to the Gentiles"; those of the other seven bear the worthy names of James, Peter, John and Jude. At last we reach the supernal "Observatory", where brilliant lights and mysterious shadows curiously interchange. In the distance we see high on the summit of the everlasting

hills, the New Jerusalem, bathed in light, with its foundations of precious stones, its walls of jasper and gates of pearl having angel guardians. A crystal river courses its way through this Celestial City, on the banks of which stands the Tree of Life with its leaves for the healing of the nations. Majestic Temple! An Eden for an entrance and a Paradise for an exit!

The sublime vision given us in the Bible is God's credential of authorship. Yet there are some who count the "great things" of His Law as a "strange thing", and would dispose of God by writing His name with a small "g". Their act is a confession that they find God and the Bible inseparable; that the only way to reject the Bible, which reproves their sin, is to disprove the existence of God. Their effort is as futile as that of the hag who broke the mirror which reflected her ghastly appearance, thinking that the act made her a goddess of beauty. God's omnipotence is not determined by the size of His initial letter; He reigned before the alphabet was invented. He is the Alpha of all beginnings and the Omega of all endings. I like to meet a thinking man, but may we ever be spared from the belief that man originated thought. He himself was a thought before he became a thinker; a thought with which the Infinite Thinker busied Himself since the morning stars sang together. And the thoughts which He has had for man's good, both here and hereafter, are chronicled in this old Book which

some regard as a “strange thing”. Spirit of God, open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law.

II. THE INFALLIBLE BOOK.

Behold the Bible! The Book of eternal accuracies. Where did the author of the eighth Psalm get his knowledge of the heavens? Not from the Chaldee astronomers. Who taught Abraham and David and Jeremiah that the stars were innumerable? The ancient world of science had no such knowledge. The old catalogue of Hipparchus gives the total number of stars to be one thousand and twenty-two. Later Proctor places the maximum number between five and six thousand. During the long hours of the clearest night only about three thousand can be seen by the unaided eye. The modern telescope confirms Jeremiah’s statement that they “cannot be numbered”.

Open your Bible at the first chapter and see its authenticity in the story of the Creation. Please observe that the word create is used three times, and only three; verse one, for the origin of matter; verse twenty-one, the origin of life, and verse twenty-seven, the origin of soul. In every other case the record is God “made”, or God said “let there be”. These are exactly the points where Nature has said to Science, “Thus far canst thou go and no farther”. Given these indispensable beginnings Science can do much, but without them she is as helpless as an

Egyptian mummy. There is no conflict between the Bible and science; controversy only arises when science contradicts herself. A skeptic once asked a minister, "How do you reconcile the teachings of the Bible with the latest conclusions of science?" "I haven't seen the morning papers," quietly replied the minister, "what are the latest conclusions of science?" Science is as variable as the moon, the Bible as stable as the sun. The Psalmist proclaimed, "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." Luther had this sublime assertion of the eternal stability of the Word of God written on the walls of his chamber and embroidered on the dress of his servants.

Who instructed Moses in geology and comparative anatomy? When these modern sciences began to unwrap the earth's coverings and read the records of the rocks, those of unstable faith grew pale and trembled for the Word of God. They ascribe a vast age to our globe and agree that the order of creation was from the lower to the higher: no discord with Moses there. They give the proportion of brain to spinal cord in fish, two to one; reptiles, two and one-half to one; birds, three to one; mammals, four to one, and man, thirty-three to one. That is Moses' order exactly, but isn't it surprising that he did not get reptiles before fish, if he were so given to mistakes as the agnostic would have us think? Who taught Job that the atmosphere has weight? You get no hint in the philosophies of Aristotle and

16 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

Bacon of this astronomical fact. Galileo, the Florentine astronomer, was first to discover the gravity of the air, yet Job thirty centuries before Galileo's day said, God made "weight for the winds." David's declaration, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," was rather advanced authentic physiology. The four detailed accounts of the crucifixion are in perfect accord with anatomical facts only recently learned by science. Solomon's poetic description of death in Ecclesiastes xii:6, 7, is twenty-five hundred years ahead of the student of anatomy, and if he did not refer to the circulation of the blood in that figure, his language is exactly suited to Harvey's discovery.

The "great things of the Law" have an eternal accuracy in science, philosophy, literature and art; but, not intending the Bible as a textbook in these branches, it should not be thought strange that God touches them with brevity. Ingersoll delivered an address at his brother's grave in which he does not mention public schools; is he therefore a champion of illiteracy? In his lecture on Shakespeare he gives no algebraic equation; is he therefore opposed to mathematics? I find no love story in his lecture on ghosts; does he therefore not believe in marriage and happy homes? We expect a funeral oration to deal with death and the dead rather than elaborate on educational equipment. We expect a lecture on Shakespeare to illuminate the life and letters of the world's greatest rhetorician rather than magnify

mathematics. We expect a gush on ghosts to speak of spooks rather than depict domestic delights and discords. We expect the Bible to deal with duty and destiny rather than specialize in the sciences. It is not only a library for life but is also the encyclopedia for eternity. The theme of the Bible is Christianity. It sounds the anthem of man's future in no minor key. It chants no dirge at the grave, but sings the triumphant march of the Spirit into a destiny that shall unfold forever; "a destiny in which the intellect, full orbed, shall sweep majestically through the infinite depths of truth; a destiny in which the will shall feel no fetters but the will of God; a destiny in which the heart shall throb with the ecstasy of love; a destiny in which the conscience shall thrill eternally with the joys of holiness; a destiny in which the soul shall find possibilities born of possibilities that know no bounds but the infinite."

If we would see the beauty of this infallible Book we must let the light from above illuminate its sacred pages. When President Hitchcock of Amherst College assembled a science class in a new recitation room with sky windows, the introduction to his lecture was, "Young men, all the light we have here comes from above." How can we hope to understand the Bible without that clarifying light "from above", for "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because

they are spiritually discerned.” The inability of the carnal mind, unaided of the Spirit, to grasp the great truths of the Bible does not destroy its authenticity. A society of infidels gathered around a table to drink a blasphemous toast to the Bible, which they had agreed to burn. The one to whose lot it fell to perform the task stood in the glow of the fire prepared for the occasion, and reaching for the Bible said to his associates, “Men, ought we not to put a better book on this table before we commit to the fire this one which has gripped the hearts of millions who claim it was written by an infinite hand?” Not a man present dared offer a negative reply, and the burning embers died out before they had the first sentence of their book written.

The Bible has often been reviled, but it has never been refuted. It is as impregnable as Gibraltar; and they who attack it, like the waves which sweep against that giant rock in the Mediterranean, do not break or even shake it, but only lash themselves asunder. Its foundations have been examined by the searching eyes of such assailants as Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, and LaPlace, but it ever stands a glorious fulfillment of the words of its Author, “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The empire of Caesar is gone and the legions of Rome are moulding in the dust; the pride of the Pharaohs is fallen and the pyramids they raised for their tombs are sinking in the desert sands; Tyre is a rock for bleaching

fishermen's nets and Sidon has scarcely a wreck to mark its site. This proves how transient is the noblest work of man and how enduring is every word that God has spoken. Tradition has dug for the Bible many graves; intolerance has lighted for it many fagots; many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; many a Peter has denied it with an oath; and many a Demas has forsaken it; but it ever remains the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

III. THE TRANSFORMING BOOK.

Behold the Bible! The Book which brought a pagan world to the foot of the Cross and led the cannibal to feed on that Bread which came down from Heaven. The futility of transforming men by education alone was proven by Hans Edge, who spent fifteen years in Greenland attempting to make intelligent Christians of the inhabitants. With a broken heart he delivered his farewell message from the words of Isaiah, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for naught." Two years later he was succeeded by John Beck, who preached Christ crucified. One of the first converts was Kajarnack, who became a flame of evangelistic zeal amid the frozen regions of Greenland. Christ's death and resurrection in their revolutionary power affected instantly what fifteen years of educational effort failed to show any signs of accomplishing. Beck's ministry verified Paul's statement, "Your labour is

20 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

not in vain in the Lord.” Robert Moffat was told that if he went to preach to the savage chief, Afri-caner, the latter would make of his skull a drinking cup and use his skin for a drumhead. But with undaunted faith this humble missionary told the story of the Suffering Christ and Risen Lord with the result that the raging lion became as gentle as a lamb. The cruel chieftain was transformed into a consecrated Christian.

When James Calvert arrived at the Fiji Islands his first gruesome task was to gather up the bones and flesh which had been left over from a cannibal feast the day before. Within less than a century, which is scarcely a holiday in the cycle of evolution, the Gospel of Christ had transformed these cannibals into Christian men who delight to be seated at the Lord’s table. Mr. Darwin, the evolutionist, visited Terra Del Fuego in 1833, and found a people whom he thought were incapable of being civilized, and wrote: “The Fuegians are in a more miserable state of barbarism than I ever expected to have seen any human being.” On his second visit, thirty-six years later, he found those whom he had regarded as below domestic animals transformed by the Gospel into Christians, and in his astonishment wrote: “I cer-tainly should have predicted that not all the mis-sionaries in the world could have done what has been done. It is wonderful and it shames me, as I have always prophesied a failure. It is a grand success.” Being convinced that a revolutionary force rather

than an evolutionary process had been at work on Terra Del Fuego, he addressed a letter to the London Missionary Society which concluded: "I shall feel proud if your committee shall think fit to elect me as honorary member of your society." In that letter Darwin, the evolutionist, enclosed twenty-five pounds for Gospel missions.

A Catholic priest rebuked a young woman and her brother for reading "that bad book," pointing to the Bible. She replied, "A little while ago my brother was an idler, a gambler and a drunkard. Since he began to study the Bible he works with industry, goes no more to the saloon and no longer plays cards, but brings his money home to poor old mother, making our home life quiet and delightful. How comes it, Sir, that a bad book produces such good fruits?" That verifies the words of the Psalmist, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to Thy Word." Statistics prove the world over that life is secure and child birth legitimate in exact proportion as the Bible is read and heeded.

Before asking me to give up faith in the Bible, prove to me that unbelief has greater merit than the Gospel. Show me a drunkard made sober, a libertine made pure, or a gambler charmed from his cards by unbelief. Has infidelity ever lifted the people of benighted islands from their ignorance and idolatry into lives of purity and hope? All the infidels and agnostics of the world do not give as much

22 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

light as a single glowworm. When I see the light of the Gospel dispelling the darkness of Africa and causing the desert to rejoice and to blossom as the rose, I thank God that I am not an infidel. When I see the Church of Christ pointing men to the City of Eternal Refuge and counting no sacrifice too dear in her mission of mercy and labor of love, I again thank God that I am not an infidel. When I knelt beside my thirteen year old son who had been fatally crushed beneath the wheels of an auto and saw the last gleam of consciousness fade from his eyes, knowing his unquestioned faith in Jesus as his personal Savior, like David, I rested in the hope, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," and thanked God then and shall never cease thanking Him that I am not an infidel.

This blessed Book is my Book. I want no better weapon for life's conflict, no truer chart for life's pilgrimage and no brighter light in death's valley. I open its pages and see my sinfulness and my Savior, my helplessness and my help, my ruin and my resurrection. It sets before me my cross and my crown, my condemnation and my Christ, my Calvary and my coronation. This Book is the omnipotent Word of God, the dynamic power of Christ and the two-edged Sword of the Spirit. It is older than our fathers, truer than tradition and more powerful than ceremonies. It is more authoritative than councils, more infallible than popes and more orthodox than creeds. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and

practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to sustain you and power to endue you. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened and Hell disclosed. Read it slowly, fervently and prayerfully. It merits the highest respect, rewards the humblest believer and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents. It is stained with the blood of martyrs who died for its doctrines, moistened with the tears of penitents who sought its proffered mercy and marked with the fingerprints of believers who verified its promises. Put this Book in the hands of your son when he goes to war; put it in the hands of your daughter on her wedding day and put it under your pillow in time of sickness. Dear old Book! It rescues the tempted, comforts those who mourn and rejoices with those who rejoice. Holy Book! Divine in its Authorship, Infallible in its declarations and Transforming in its influence. Blessed Book! Good enough for earth, just enough for Judgment and immutable enough for Heaven. Will you not make it your Book today?

II

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

*"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is
the power of God unto salvation to every one that
believeth."* —Romans 1: 16.

On the left bank of the Tiber, fifteen miles from where that river flows into the sea, looking down from her seven hills, stood the ancient city of Rome, with a population of one million two hundred thousand souls. Among these were a few Christians to whom Paul addressed his Roman letter, the only one of his epistles, with the possible exception of the Colossian letter, written to a people with whom he had not previously labored, but unto whom he purposed soon to come. In the words of the text he sounds forth with no uncertain tone his faith in the Gospel of Christ which is to be his message when he reaches Rome. Why should he be ashamed of the Bible? It has God for its Author, humanity for its audience, redemption for its theme, and truth for its contents. It is the oldest, truest, most transforming, and only infallible document in the world. More authentic history, sublimer truths, purer ethics, richer poetry, and sweeter strains of eloquence cannot elsewhere be found. For two thousand years man has been a student of the inspired Word, but some of its richest and sweetest

truths he has yet to learn. Who would be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ?

I. WHO?

What man is this who was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ? It was Paul, the scholar, the learned student of Gamaliel. There never was a time when scholarship had less occasion to blush for believing the Bible than today. The promise of Isaiah to the Church is constantly being fulfilled: "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper." The house in which Voltaire once lived in Geneva is now used as a depot for Bibles. On the spot, in Peoria, Illinois, where Ingersoll prepared some of his cutting witticisms against the church and Scriptures, now stands the Young Men's Christian Association building. So the Word of God goes triumphing over its foes. In a ministerial meeting one day, the subject of higher criticism came up, a minister having just read a paper on "How We Should Defend the Bible." One brother arose and said: "Brethren, that old Book doesn't need defending; what it needs is preaching. These fellows who are running around trying to defend the Bible remind me of a pug dog trying to defend a lion in a cage. That lion doesn't need defense; just turn him loose and he will look after his own defense. What the Bible needs is proclamation, not defense. No man has ever been commissioned to defend the Bible, but thousands are commissioned to preach the Bible."

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26 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

Paul's declaration was to the effect that a scholar need not apologize for believing the Bible as if there were something in it that could not bear the closest scrutiny from every point of view, either in respect to its historical basis of fact, its divine rationality, its doctrinal system, or its power to give salvation to man. The more light thrown upon the Gospel, the less occasion the believer has for shame. Every tablet overturned by the pick of the archaeologists, and they are at it all the while, confirms the authenticity of the Bible. Why should scholarship have shame when every test to which the Bible has been subjected only substantiates its message? The Bible is as reliable as the sun; our interpretation of it as variable as a clock. We may adjust our clocks and turn them forward an hour or move them back at will, but the sun moves on without variableness. It would not be more foolish to attempt adjusting the sun to agree with the clock than it is foolish to alter the Bible to agree with one's preconceived ideas. Scholarship need never stagger at the Word of God.

Paul was not only a scholar but he was a chosen messenger of God. Of all men who should not be ashamed of the Gospel, surely the minister stands first. Paul had just said, "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also." No man is ready to preach, nor should he receive ordination at the hands of his fellowmen to stand in this holy office, until he can say with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The first

qualification of the minister of the Gospel is not that he be learned or eloquent, but that he believe. Whatever may be the position of other men, he must accept the Bible as the Word of God. If this be impossible, then let him choose any other honorable profession but certainly not the ministry. Doubts may settle about the Gospel herald but he must face and master them in secret and come before his audience with an unclouded mind and a positive message. The pulpit must be a fountain of faith and never should the blush of shame hang over it to dim its holy light.

The war against this old Book is most aggressively waged in institutions of learning, some of them operating under a Christian name and supported by Christian money. Institutions, if you please, where young men are being trained for the high office of the Gospel ministry. From these hot beds of doubt and liberal thinking have come not a few men who are today posing as ambassadors of God who cannot say with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." One of these modern liberalists stated frankly when being examined for the ministry, that he did not believe in the inspiration of the Bible as a whole. Is it any marvel that his ministry has been a failure? Read the biographies of the great spiritual men who have moved the world Godward and you will find they held fast to the old Book, believed it, preached it, and lived up to its standard.

"What am I to do?" asks the doubting messenger, "I cannot believe the Bible as our fathers did." I

28 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

will tell you in three words what to do. Quit the pulpit. You are an unhappy man if you deliver an uncertain message. God has withdrawn His approval and you can be little more than sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. One of these theological doubt dispensers preached in a country church and at the close of the sermon an old man said to him, "Young man, you dug up more snakes than you killed." It is high treason to God for one of His ambassadors to neglect the great themes of ruin and redemption, moral accountability and coming judgment, for science, philosophy, book reviews, political economy or the glories of our splendid materialistic civilization. A minister recently preached on "The Psychology of the Solar Plexus." Such flummery makes one feel as if that minister needs to be handed one in his solar plexus.

Jesus never wavered concerning the Scriptures. Every mooted passage of the Old Testament He quoted or in some way used in His short ministry. He never entertained a doubt as to the authenticity of any part of it. He quoted from the story of Jonah. Surely where He went we should unhesitatingly follow. Some of these doubters ask, "Do you believe the Israelites were saved by looking at a brass serpent?" Jesus believed it. Why should not I? He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." The church or preacher that does not accept the Bible as a whole might as well exchange it for any work of philosophy or a patent medicine almanac as far as the salvation of

the world is concerned. If you are ashamed of the Bible get out of the pulpit.

II. WHERE?

Paul was facing the Greek and Roman classical world not only to preach the Gospel of Christ, but also to challenge the claims of any and all religions with which the Gospel came in conflict. Not ashamed of the Gospel in Rome, the center of the world's political power, the seat of religion and learning? Here were the famous schools of philosophy. Here was the Pantheon with its many gods. Here was the throne of the Caesars terrorizing the world and exulting over the death of Jesus. These things Paul knew and they gave color to his ringing declaration, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The expression of his belief in the Gospel robbed him of his liberty in Rome as he was quite certain it would, but in spite of this knowledge, his declaration was none the less fearless. When Paul wrote these words, Rome was the metropolis of the world, the seat of universal empire. In imperial splendor she sat upon her seven hills and all nations of the earth bowed at her feet. She had been enriched by the spoils of war and tributes of oriental monarchies, but greater riches she was to receive when Paul came with the Gospel of Christ.

The world needs the same old Gospel today. I can bring you nothing better than the unadulterated truth of God. I am not ashamed of the Gospel for what it has done for me, for what it has done for the world

30 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

and for what it will do for your city. Why do we not have the Bible read in our public schools? Are we ashamed of the Book? When I hear some men try to account for the fact that the Bible is not read in the schools it reminds me of what took place in the sharp rivalry between the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. The question came up in Minneapolis as to whether or not the Bible should be read in the schools. This was left to a committee of three men. One member of the committee, a Christian, favored having it read. A second member was a Catholic and opposed having it read. The third man was neutral and realized that his vote would determine the whole matter. He said he had never read the Bible and could not intelligently vote until he had read it. They adjourned, giving him two weeks to read the Book. When they met again he was still undecided and two weeks more were given him to read. In casting his vote he said, "This is undoubtedly a very great book, a wonderfully good book. I think as a rule it should be read in the schools, but I vote against having it read in the schools of Minneapolis; for by careful reading, I find that it mentions most favorably St. Paul many times, and I don't find Minneapolis mentioned once." There are men who for like foolish reasons turn this old Book down. You cannot afford to be ashamed of it at any time or place.

The Bible, like many of our mothers, is a little old-fashioned and decidedly plain; but who would be ashamed of either of them anywhere? One of the most

pathetic things I ever saw was the picture of a poor, over-worked widow sitting at the kitchen table weeping over a letter received from her son in college. She had looked forward to the day when she might go to the college town and hear him deliver his graduating oration. It was this anticipated joy that enabled her to do from four to six washings a week to support herself and keep him in school. Now he writes, "Mother, don't come to see me graduate. Your clothes are not good enough. You would feel bad and I would be embarrassed." Poor, heart-broken mother! Young man, never be ashamed of the mother who gave you birth and manicured her fingers over the wash-tub to give you an education.

How different the story of the son of a southern widow whose excellent work made him the valedictorian of his college class. He was also to participate in an oratorical contest and insisted upon his mother's presence to hear his oration and class address. With no little hesitation she came, clad in her plain dress and sunbonnet. Her presence gave him an inspiration which made his delivery masterful, and when the moment came for the awarding of the medal the great audience was breathless with interest. A gentleman stepped to the platform with the beautiful gold medal dangling from a ribbon which hung on his forefinger. After a few appropriate words he called the son of this widow to his side and announced that he was the winner of the prize. Instead of pinning the medal on his coat lapel, the honored youth, to the surprise of

all, stepped down to the plain little woman and said, "Mother, you wear this. You are worthy of it, for without you I never could have won it." The applause soon ceased and the audience wept in honor of an act so brave, so noble and so appropriate. There is little hope for a boy who is ashamed of his mother and his mother's Bible.

III. WHAT?

What is this of which Paul was not ashamed when he set his face toward Rome? "The Gospel of Christ." There are five things about this Gospel which must have prompted his courageous declaration. He was not ashamed of the antiquity of the Gospel of Christ. Some of the religions of the Roman Empire were based on myths whose fancied existence antedated history. To them Christianity was but the "Infant of days." The Brahmin will tell us that for three thousand years his ancestors have worshipped the Indian Triad on the banks of the Ganges. The Hindu claims his faith was hoary with age when Christianity had its birth. Paul saw the mistake of dating the Christian religion from the birth of Jesus. Christ incarnate, crucified and risen from the dead was only the culmination of a revelation already ages old. Abraham believed in Christ and rejoiced to see His day approaching. Christianity is supported beyond challenge by historic environment. The first simple records of our faith, as soon as man sinned and fell from communion with God, record the promise of salvation through Christ. Who wants a religion which

antedates man and sin? When Paul marched forth the champion of the Christian religion, he had espoused no new faith, but one as old as man himself.

He was not ashamed of the prophetic character of the Gospel of Christ. Jesus came in fulfillment of a hundred predictions uttered by prophets of many ages. His coming was set in symbol and sacrifice, in type and ceremony. Every detail of His advent was so buttressed by prophecy that Paul stood uncompromisingly for the Deity of Christ. Mysteries may surround the Incarnation but of the glorious fact he was not ashamed. Every circumstance and characteristic of Christ's ministry, the manner and details of His death and resurrection, and the spread of His Gospel to all nations, were clearly set forth in prophecy centuries before He came. In this respect the Gospel of Christ stands without a rival among the faiths of the world. The heroes of all false religions have been either myths or self appointed men for whom their disciples neither looked nor were prepared. Who prophesied the coming of Confucius or Mohammed? The heroes of all false religions were at best but teachers. Jesus stands on an entirely different platform. He is not only a teacher, but a Savior as well. He alone can say, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" and prove His assertion by the power of God. Surely there is nothing in the life of Jesus of which we need be ashamed. He was a friend of publicans and sinners; tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin. His enemies were among the first

to lay at His feet a tribute to His goodness and glory. Nineteen centuries have passed since He walked among men and He is still the peerless Man, "The chief among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely." Who would be ashamed of this Divine One?

Paul was not ashamed of the doctrine of the New Birth. The Gospel of Christ shows us not only righteousness *for* us, but righteousness *in* us by regeneration, so that every saved man becomes a new creature in Christ. The one indispensable plank in any religious platform is the Cross of Jesus Christ. Two methods of salvation have been repeatedly offered to the world. The one is merely ethical; the other, by the way of the blood-stained Cross. There can be no fellowship between the two. The first may be popular but no man was ever saved by any sort of ethical process. It is emphatically stated, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." The New Birth through the blood of Christ is no aristocratic privilege reserved for the favored few. It graciously makes provision for these, for all men are sinners, but it extends its unspeakable privilege to the outcast and most degraded. The royal invitation is, "Who-soever will, let him come." Paul was not the minister to direct men to heaven by sending them over the ethical drawbridge which ever stands open, making passage to the Celestial City impossible. "Ye must be born again," is the trumpet call of the Gospel and of this he was not ashamed.

He was not ashamed of the faculty or organ by

which salvation is apprehended. It is not the faculty of reason, as many think. Reason is not large enough to be the organ of Christianity. To make it so would destroy the universality of the Christian religion. All men cannot reason but all men can see, therefore imagination or the faith faculty is the organ of Christianity. Of this fact Paul was not ashamed nor need we be. The child and the untutored are not noted for their reasoning, but they possess an inherent imagination. Reason has its place in Christianity; it is to Christianity what the rudder is to a ship. The rudder directs the ship, but it cannot carry the cargo; faith is the ship itself. The intellect may pare away the husk from soul food but faith alone can feed upon the delicious "Bread from Heaven." A window is a good thing in a house but you do not enter your house by the way of the window, you have a door for that purpose. Reason is an important factor in Christianity but the way to enter the holy temple of righteousness is by the door of faith. An adventurer may as well set out to explore the Mammoth Cave and expect to map it correctly with only the light of a glow-worm, as for one to endeavor grasping the whole of Christianity with the feeble light of man's reason. You might as well attempt to pull a box car through the barrel of a shot gun as to expect your reason to admit the whole of Christianity.

Paul was not ashamed of the Bible doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The resurrection of Jesus proves the promise of immortality, not by argument

36 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

but by demonstration, and gives us the guarantee of a like resurrection. Did He not say, "Because I live, ye shall live also. I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live." We are taught in this Gospel that these bodies of ours, mortal though they be, shall be fashioned anew like unto His glorious body. The fact that Paul was not ashamed of the doctrine of immortality is clearly seen in that it was frequently the theme of his message to the Church. A memorable incidence of this is seen in the fifteenth chapter of 1. Corinthians. May God help us not to be ashamed of this transforming, soul saving, sin defeating Gospel of Christ.

IV. WHY?

Briefly notice why Paul was not ashamed of this Gospel. We have his reason in these words, "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Power was the pride and boast of Rome. She was proud of her imperial authority, proud of her victorious legions, proud of her world-wide domain, and proud of her wealth and learning. Power, not virtue, was the goal of her ambition. Her whole history culminated in an apotheosis of power, personified in the Caesars. Paul does not say, "The Gospel of Christ is the wisdom of God," nor "the love of God," but "the power of God." That is the word to use to catch the ear of Rome. When he mentions power, Rome responds just as the subscriber on a party line telephone recognizes his ring and seems not to hear

the many others. Rome listened as if to ask, "What have you to tell us of power, Paul? Wherein does this new power of which you speak differ from Cæsar power?" He replies, "Caesar power is a destroying power; the power of God is a regenerating power, a divine power, a power which brings the dead to life, a power unto salvation, not limited to the favored few but offered to every one that believeth."

Paul would introduce this new power into Rome; he would set over against Roman militarism, and the brute force of Caesardom, the power of the Gospel, with full confidence as to the result. This domineering subtlety which he faced was the infant reptile of which the poisonous brutality of modern Prussianism is the full-grown venomous adder. As Paul zealously offered Rome the regenerating, transforming Gospel as a gracious and everlasting substitute for the insidious serpent of despotism, the United States and her Allies with no less zeal have resolved in defense of their honor and their lives to exterminate from the earth the atrocious monster of Hohenzollern intrigue. Their death dealing blow at this malignant viper is being so effectively delivered that the whole of Kaiserdom has drawn its last natural breath, and the glad day with all certainty will dawn when liberty giving democracy shall triumph forever over brutal, barbaric autocracy, for we will keep everlasting at it until this despicable creature ceases to wiggle. Mark you, Paul relied implicitly upon the power of the Gospel and with all of our unprecedented splendid war equipment we must

not for one moment in this gigantic struggle divorce ourselves from the invincible power of the Gospel.

God says, "My Word," not Shakespeare's nor Emerson's, nor Browning's, nor Carlisle's; not some man's opinion about that Word, but "My Word," saith the Lord, "shall not return unto Me void." You try reading Bacon, or Spencer, or Shakespeare to a poor, lost soul in sin; try to win back a wayward boy or restore a fallen girl with anything else than the Word of God and you will certainly fail; but go into the redlight district or the rescue mission with the Word of God and read to your hearer, the repentance Psalm, the fifty-first, and you need not be surprised to see tears on the cheeks of the listener; then read the three-fold parable in Luke fifteen, of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the wandering son, and you need not keep that up long to find that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation.

Paul uttered these words nineteen hundred years ago, but the Gospel has the same power today that it had then. It is still making drunkards sober and libertines pure; it is still bringing infidels to their knees and changing men from trickery and intrigue to accept the precepts of Jesus and practice the Golden Rule. You can preach Buddhism without Buddha, or Mohammedanism without Mohammed, but you cannot preach Christianity without Jesus Christ. When you preach Christ, you present a Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The simple condition upon which the power of

the Gospel will save is, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Faith accepts Christ; unbelief rejects Him. The believer has all things; the unbeliever has nothing. Faith is the conducting medium through which the power of God flashes like an electric shock from God into the soul. May the Lord help every unsaved person in this audience to open the heart in belief to Christ and be eternally saved.

III

THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL

"A river went out of Eden, to water the garden, and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads."
Gen. 2: 10.

If, as one has said, "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed," then this river of four heads might be a type of the four Gospels. The Bible stands among other books just as Jesus stands among other men. As He was both human and Divine even so the Bible is both inspired and natural. I most heartily believe in the inspiration of the Bible but we do well to know it is an inspired message rather than an inspired manuscript. The message is unquestionably Divine but the manuscript breathes much of the human. Even the scholar, Paul, became so wonderfully interested in his message that he sometimes forgot his grammar. That is much better than for one to be so interested in his grammar that he forgets his message. It need not be thought strange that Matthew, who wrote to the Jews, heard Jesus say: "Take no money in your girdle," for the Jews carried money in their girdles; while Luke heard Him say, "Take no money in your purses," for he wrote to the Greeks, who carried money in their purses. Their manuscripts differ but the message is the same. What they both

say is, "Take no money in the thing wherein ye carry money." Some imagine they see discrepancies if not contradictions in the Gospels and ask why some one writer, instead of four, did not give us the complete account of the person and work of Jesus. It is hoped in this message to see the wisdom of God in giving us the four-fold account of the world's Savior, and that as we hear the four Evangelists speak we may appreciate more fully the common voice of their testimony and get a new vision of our Risen Lord.

I. MATTHEW'S MESSAGE.

Had Matthew wanted a text for his Gospel he could have chosen Zech. 9:9. "Behold thy King," for his theme is, Christ the King, the Son of David. He was a Jew and an official of the Roman empire. Jesus called him from collecting taxes to be one of His disciples. He soon made a feast for his new Master and saw in Him the fulfillment of prophetic promises of a coming Messiah who was to become the King of the chosen people of God. His Gospel is God's last message to the Jews. He quotes one hundred Old Testament prophecies to show them that Jesus is their King. It is in this Gospel alone that we read, "And thou Bethlehem * * * out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel." He traces the descent of Jesus from Abraham the father of their nation, through David, for the triple purpose of proving that He belonged to the royal line, was heir to the throne and the Promised King of the Jews. He rests the

42 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

logic of his message upon Old Testament revelation, that the Jews might see the exact correspondence of Jesus in the promised Messiah. He draws two hundred and fifty comparisons of the great Teacher and the promised King. The historical character of the one is placed side by side with the prophetic character of the other. He continually points to the Old Testament for proof that could not fail to have great convincing power to the candid Jew.

It is in this Gospel that John the Baptist comes preaching "the kingdom," saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In Mark and Luke he preaches "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Matthew uses the term "kingdom of Heaven" about thirty times. He records fourteen of our Lord's parables and eleven of them open with words like these, "The kingdom of Heaven is like a net," or "The kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven." In this Gospel we read, "The kingdom of Heaven is like a certain *King*, which made a marriage for His son, and sent out His servants to call them that were bidden, but they would not come." In Luke's Gospel it reads, "A certain *Man* made a great supper, and bade many; but they would not come." The King and the servants do not appeal to Luke, it is the *Man* he sees. With him, in the twenty parables he records, it is always "A certain *Man*." "A certain *Man* planted a vineyard." In Mark also, the title of honor is dropped; it is always "A certain *Man*." In Matthew alone do we find such words of authority

as “Then shall the *King* say to them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. * * * Then shall He say also unto them on His left hand, Depart from me, Ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

It is Matthew who hears John the Baptist say of Jesus, “Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire,”—language perfectly suited to the Lord of the Kingdom, but for this very reason unnoticed by Mark who sees in Jesus the Divine Servant. When Jesus and His disciples, passing through the corn fields on the Sabbath, plucked the grain, “The Pharisees said, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day. But He said unto them, Have ye never read what David did?” If they accept acts of King David can they not accept like acts of their Divine King? In John’s Gospel, under a similar charge, His reply is not “what David did,” but as the Son of God He answers, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” Mark and Luke follow Matthew’s account until Matthew heard Jesus declare, “But I say unto you that in this place is One greater than the temple,” and “If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would have not condemned the guiltless.” Words found in no other Gospel, but quite fitting here as coming from their King.

44 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

It is Matthew who gives us the picture of the mother coming with her two sons, James and John, to Jesus with the petition, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left, in thy *kingdom*." Matthew is the only evangelist who records the miracle of the fish containing the tax money. Nothing that had to do with taxes would escape the eye of this collector of customs. He alone records the bargain of Judas to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. His has been called the business man's Gospel. He records the five lengthy discourses of the Lord. In writing of Jesus he frequently declared, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet," but the children of the Kingdom knew not the Heir when He appeared, nor would they accept Him as their King.

II. MARK'S MESSAGE.

Had Mark wanted a text for his Gospel he could have chosen Isaiah 42:1, "Behold my Servant," for his theme is Jesus the Servant of Jehovah. Mark himself was an humble servant. "They had John, whose surname was Mark, for their minister," and Paul writes, "Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." When we turn to the Gospel of him who was living to serve, we see in our Lord the Servant of Jehovah. Mark's order of events is the one common to the first three Gospels. It is believed to have been the first of the Gospel narratives written which accounts for its dominant order.

Where Matthew diverges from Mark's arrangement, Luke converges to it; and where Luke's order differs from that of Mark, Matthew supports Mark. Matthew and Luke never run parallel except where they follow Mark's order of events. Mark wrote his Gospel for the Romans or Gentile Christians who were looking for no promised Deliverer; hence little attention is given to fulfilled prophecies. These were men of power and regarded that man most worthy who was the greatest worker, conqueror and organizer. Mark strikes the key-note by showing that in deeds of power Jesus surpassed their Caesars and proved Himself the Servant of Jehovah.

Everywhere we can see the mark of a servant in this Gospel. The events in the life of Jesus are passed in rapid succession. He records no long sermons, gives no genealogy, makes no reference to the miraculous birth and the adoration of the wise men as does Matthew; he mentions no boyhood at Nazareth or visit to Jerusalem at the age of twelve, as given by Luke; neither does he refer to His pre-existence with the Father as found in John. All these are important in their place, but Mark comes at once to His service. He gives us three miracles of this Wonder-Worker in the first chapter while in Matthew's Gospel we are in the eighth chapter before we read the account of the first miracle. There is a detail and yet a brevity in Mark's Gospel characteristic of the servant. Matthew takes eleven verses to tell of the temptation, Luke takes thirteen verses and Mark takes but two verses,

46 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

yet he alone tells of the "wild beasts." The gladiators of Rome would understand what it mean to be "with the wild beasts."

We are impressed when we read the first chapter of Mark to find that the word "immediately" occurs ten times. True, it is not always translated "immediately" but it is the same word of prompt action. "Forthwith," "By and By," "Straightway," "Anon," always from the same Greek root. This word occurs but eighty times in the New Testament, and is found forty-one times in Mark's Gospel. The only short chapter in the Gospel is the last one: The story is such a continuous whole that the committee could find no place to divide it into chapters. As it now stands every chapter but three begins with a conjunction and with one exception that conjunction is "and." Jesus did this *and* that *and* that. Of the six hundred eighty-eight verses, four hundred sixty-two of them begin with the word "and." I have wondered where the printer ever found enough capital A's to put it into print; five hundred and forty-two are required. The word "and" is used no less than twelve hundred ninety times in Mark's Gospel.

In this Gospel we do not see so much of Christ's claim on man, but rather man's claim on Christ. He is careful to impress us that we do not by service become sons, but by sonship we may become true servants. He is more occupied with the doings of Christ than with the teachings of Christ. For this reason he records but four parables, and they each have a great

lesson in service, but he records eighteen of the miracles of the Divine Worker. In the corresponding period of Christ's life when Matthew heard the promised King preach His sermon of "Woes," Mark saw the Servant of Jehovah all absorbed beholding a widow giving her mites. No true service, however humble, escaped the eye of Jesus, and Mark does not fail to record His words, "Whosoever shall give you a cup of cold water to drink in My name, I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

It is Mark who tells us that when the little children were brought that Jesus might touch them, "He took them up in His arms and blessed them." Several times he is careful to note the details of the loving service of our Lord. In Mark's Gospel it frequently occurs, and in no other Gospel is it noted, that Jesus was so thoroughly at the disposal of others "He could not so much as eat." It is Mark who tells us Jesus exhorted the overworked disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." But there was no rest for Jesus. So much is He regarded as a Servant in this Gospel, that He is never called "Lord" until after the resurrection. The Gospel closes with this significant statement, "They went forth and preached, the *Lord working* with them, and confirming the word with signs following. He is the Worker, though risen. There is nothing of service that escapes the eye of Mark, whose life was given to humble service in his Master's name. After reading this Gospel we can appreciate this statement, "Blessed

are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Verily, He shall gird Himself and make them sit down to meat, and He will come forth and serve them." May the Lord through Mark's message inspire us to more faithful service.

III. LUKE'S MESSAGE.

Had Luke wanted a text for his Gospel he could have chosen Zech. 6:12, "Behold the Man," for his theme is, Jesus the Son of Man. Luke was an educated Greek physician. Paul calls him "The beloved physician." He was a native of Antioch in Syria, and labored with Paul in his missionary tours among the Gentiles. He wrote his Gospel to the Greeks, who worshipped man, and made their gods in the likeness of themselves. They regarded one of superior intellect, becoming habits, and graceful action as nearest their ideal. Luke saw in Jesus the perfect Man and so writes of Him to them, tracing His descent from common humanity. He makes little reference to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in which they would not be interested as were the Jews to whom Matthew wrote.

Luke gives prominence to the human feelings of Christ. He uses the name Jesus which is expressive of the human element of the Lord, two hundred forty-six times. He gives in detail the circumstances of the birth and infancy of the Holy Child. He alone records the three inspired songs of the Nativity. We would expect in Matthew to hear the Magi ask,

"Where is He that is born *King of the Jews?*" but in Luke the angel sings, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all* people; for unto you is born a Saviour; and this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the *Babe* wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." It is here and here only we are told how "the Child grew;" how the teachers and doctors who heard Him at the age of twelve in the temple "were astonished at His understanding and answers;" how "He went down and was subject unto His parents;" and how "He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Thus, Luke shows how Jesus joined Himself to us in birth and childhood, that, being Himself a Man, He might in His own blessed life bring us near to God.

It is Luke who writes of His sermon in the Nazareth Synagogue, in which He tells His fellow-towns-men of His Life's mission, that His Gospel is not for Jews only but for all people. In commissioning the twelve, Matthew heard Jesus say, "Go not into the way of the *Gentiles*, and into any city of the *Samaritans* enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Luke simply says, "He sent them forth to preach," then adds, "they departed, preaching the Gospel *everywhere*." The story of the penitent thief and the prodigal son (and Luke alone records them) must ever render his Gospel the Good News of free, full, and present Salvation.

It is Dr. Luke, and he alone, who tells us that when Jesus was agonizing in the garden, "His sweat was

as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” This unusual thing would not escape the eye of the physician. Again it is Luke alone who tells us that Jesus was circumcised the eighth day, a writ, the observance of which, the physician would not fail to notice. Luke records four miracles unnoted by the other Evangelists, and they are all special cures effected by the Divine Physician. They are “The widow’s son raised, the crooked woman made straight, the curing of the dropsy, and restoring the ear which Peter severed in the Garden. Seventeen of his twenty-two miracles are cures. He records fourteen parables not found in the other Gospels, and they fairly tinge with the problems of human life and common duty, showing the Perfect Man’s teaching and attitude just where it is most needed. Among them are “The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, and The Rich Man and Lazarus.

This is the Gospel of prayer. Luke records two parables on prayer, 11: 5-8; 18: 1-8. It is in this Gospel only we are told that at His baptism He “*was praying*” when the Holy Spirit came upon Him; that when He cleansed the leper, “He withdrew Himself *and prayed*”; that the choice of the twelve followed a night of ceaseless prayer, “He continued all night in *prayer*, and when it was day, He called His disciples unto Him, and of them He chose twelve”; that Peter’s famous confession was made “as Jesus was alone *praying*”; that the Transfiguration occurred as He prayed, “He went up into a mountain, and as *He prayed*, the

fashion of His countenance was changed"; and that the Lord's Prayer was given in answer to a request from His disciples who, "as *He was praying* when He ceased said, "Lord, teach us to pray." Fifteen times in this Gospel we are brought to see the prayer life of Jesus. Surely if He, the Perfect Man, prayed so much we cannot afford to pray so little. It is Luke who tells us that His first and last words upon the Cross were prayers. In the first, He prayed the Father to forgive His executioners, and in the last, His dying words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." May the Lord teach us so to pray.

IV. JOHN'S MESSAGE.

Had John wanted a text for his Gospel, he could have chosen Isa. 40: 9, "Behold your God," for his theme is, Jesus, the Emmanuel. John was the youngest of the twelve apostles and is spoken of as the "one whom Jesus loved." His Gospel was written much later than the other three and has a special message both for the Christian and the unsaved. He was an eye-witness of the Crucifixion and gives many details of it omitted in the other Gospels. His is a book on Christian Evidences. He records many conversations with Jesus and shows Him often among His friends. It is in this Gospel that we have a definition of a friend. From beginning to end he represents Jesus as the Incarnate God. His own words are, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye

might have life through His Name." This definite object is seen in every chapter of his Gospel. He makes use of the word "believe" one hundred one times, the word "life" sixty-five times, and the word "signs" forty-seven times. He does not ask us to believe without some reason for our doing so. He gives seven witnesses who testify that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus calls God His Father twenty-one times in Matthew, three times in Mark, and eleven times in Luke; only thirty-five times in the first three Gospels. But in John He calls God His Father one hundred eight times.

John the Baptist, who preached a "coming kingdom" in Matthew's Gospel and "repentance" in Luke's, here says, "I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." John gives us at length the talks Jesus had with His disciples, in which He seeks to make clear to them that even though He was their Messiah He would not occupy the throne of David, for His Kingdom was in His Father's House where He was going to prepare a place for those who loved Him and were faithful unto death. The evening with Nicodemus, one of the nineteen personal interviews with Jesus, was on the all important question of how we may become sons of God. It should have the early place given it in this Gospel which reveals Jesus as the Son of God. Some one has said that the Gospel of John is full of little Bibles. It is indeed the land of promise flowing with milk and honey. It is fragrant with the aroma of celestial fields. But if all the

words of Jesus were as tender as those found in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of John, we would be as badly spoiled as the sons of Eli, who would certainly have smarted from the whip of small cords had they ministered in the temple in the days of the Master. Fortunately we have the Gospel of Matthew with its Sermon on the Mount, its woes pronounced upon sinful cities, its denunciation of the Pharisees, and its picture of the last Judgment.

Matthew continually looks back into the prophecies and shows their fulfillment in Jesus; his is the Gospel of the *past*. Mark sees in Jesus the Servant, the satisfaction of daily needs; his is the Gospel of the *present*. Luke delights in telling us of coming good; his is the Gospel of the *future*. While John soars above all limits of time, unveiling the everlasting issues; his is the Gospel of *eternity*. Matthew gives a genealogy of Christ—a king must have a royal lineage—he shows Him to be a descendant of David the great king. Mark gives no genealogy, a servant needs only character. Luke gives one, the biographer of a Perfect Man shows Him to be the Son of Adam. While John simply says, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Matthew has about three hundred fifty verses peculiar to his Gospel, not found in the others; Mark has sixty-eight; Luke five hundred forty; and more than one-half of John’s message is not given in the other Gospels. Matthew does not speak of Christ’s Ascension, but leaves the Risen King on earth with His subjects. Mark gives His Resurrection and

54 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

Ascension; the Divine Servant having finished His labors returns to His reward. Luke gives the Perfect Man's Resurrection and Ascension, and notes that He promises the Comforter to His followers. John goes a step further and tells us that the Emmanuel is coming back to receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also.

Why should it be thought that there are conflicts between the four Gospels? If four men were to photograph the same building from different positions their pictures might be expected to materially differ, but they would have much in common. We may so regard the four Gospels as separate photographs of the Man of Galilee. Matthew, sitting at the receipt of customs, sees in Jesus the Promised King, and He was the King. Mark, from the path of humble service, sees in Jesus the Divine Servant; that He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and He was a servant. Luke, the physician, takes a straight front view of the Lord and shows Him as the Son of Man, and He certainly was a man. John, the devout, comes later and takes, as it were, an interior view and shows us the Son of God, and he too is right, for Jesus was the Emmanuel.

What are the common lines in these four Pictures? Not His birth, nor His age, nor His baptism, nor His transfiguration; but the cross and resurrection, the death of the flesh and the life of the spirit. Other things may be obscure but these stand out in clear lines. The promised King suffers and dies; the Divine Servant suffers and dies; the Perfect Man suffers and

dies; and the Son of God suffers and dies. The Promised King rises; the Divine Servant rises; the Perfect Man rises; and the Son of God rises. In all four Gospels Jesus is betrayed by one of His followers and denied by another; in all He is judged by the Priests and Scribes and Elders; in all Barabbas is preferred before Him; in all He is crucified, and numbered with the transgressors; in all He dies; in all He has a grave prepared by others; and in all He rises and talks with men. Finally it must be noted that the Deity of Christ stands out in clear lines in all four of these Pictures. Matthew's King was God's son; Mark's Servant was God's Son; Luke's Physician was God's Son, and in John's Gospel the doctrine of His Deity is given double emphasis as a fitting climax to the story of His life. Oh, that He may become more precious to us each time we study these four inspired Pictures.

IV

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

“My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.”

—Proverbs, vi: 20-22.

In these couplets Solomon uses poetical metaphors which liken the admonitions of the Bible to parental solicitude. The commandments of the Lord were to be bound upon the heart and tied about the neck. The ornamentation of the body antedates history, and the costume of the ancients was incomplete without an adorning necklace. As soldiers carry identification plates near their hearts, young men display attractive ties and young women wear sparkling lavallieres, so we are to treasure in our hearts the laws of God and regard them as a Diamond Necklace to grace our lives. If I had in my hands a score or more of diamonds I would speak to you of “them” but if a jeweler were to set them in a beautiful necklace I would speak of “it” as I held it before your enraptured eyes. Solomon’s exhortation about “them”, the diamond like commandments, transcends into a triple promise about “it”, the Bible necklace, which captivates the true child of God in life’s dressing room.

I. WHAT WE SHOULD DO WITH THE BIBLE.

There is a dual condition upon which the three-fold promise is given. That is, if we do two things with the Bible, it will do three things for us. The first charge is, "Bind them continually upon thine heart". In later years David said, "I have hid Thy Word in my heart". Commenting upon this declaration of David's, an old Scotchman once said, "That was a good thing in a good place for a good purpose." The reason for binding the gracious truths of the Bible upon the heart is for self development, for one's own spiritual life and growth in grace. The New Testament injunction is, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." Modern phraseology for binding continually about the heart would be, "Committing to memory", or, "Learning by heart." We do not commit what we read in the daily papers. It may interest us much to-day but is forgotten to-morrow for the reason that it is of passing or momentary concern. "Of the making of books there is no end", and we read many of them with pleasure and profit, but only those of exceptional merit ever bare a second reading. That is a rare book which reaches the second edition. Most authors live to attend the funeral of their own publication. But the Book whose truths we are enjoined to bind upon our hearts is translated into every language of the world and after proclaiming its message for twenty

centuries, enjoys a circulation exceeding that of any other one hundred books combined.

Some have the Bible in Morocco binding, others have it in Sealskin, but it is better to have it in shoe leather. Indeed, Christians are "Written epistles read and known of all men," and their edition of the Bible is more frequently read by the unsaved than is the Authorized Version. We must not only go through the Bible but must also permit it to go through us. The Bible is a mine rather than a garden and must be excavated rather than cultivated. The luxuries of a garden may be plucked by the tempted passing guest, while the treasures of a mine lie deeply hidden, but amply reward him who diligently seeks them. The threefold promise of the text is not made to those who go gardening in the Bible, strolling down its shaded avenues catching only the aroma of its more fragrant flowers and picking here and there a choice cluster of its luscious fruit. It is rather to those who with the persistence of the miner penetrate the granite of its literal stratum which overlays the inexhaustible riches of its spiritual deposit. Reading the Bible in a hurry is like trying to swallow a cocoanut whole; what meat is not lost is gulped down without tasting and the milk which is not spilled produces strangulation. A thorough and practical Bible knowledge is acquired by the diligent perusal of a responsive heart rather than by the dress parade of a presumed superior intellect.

"Bind them continually upon thine heart." The precepts of the Lord are so precious they should be bound about the most vital organ of the body. That which a man carries in his hand he may lay aside and forget, that which he wears upon his clothing may be torn from him, but that which is bound upon his heart will remain there until life departs. Emphasis must be placed upon the "continually". Few things contribute more to our religious development than constancy. There are many professed followers of the Lord who are afflicted with "Fickleitis". They are as variable as the wind and as changeable as the moon. Such oscillating church members remind us of the farmer's well which was a splendid one except it would dry up in summer and freeze over in winter. True religion is not the intermittent splash over the dam of a fluctuating stream, but is rather the invariable flow of an artesian well. He who appropriates portions of the Bible at his own convenience answers Jeremiah's description of vacillating Israel when he said, "They have * * * hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water", but he who binds the Word of God "continually" upon his heart verifies the promise of Jesus, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The second injunction relative to the truths of the Bible with which the child of God must comply if he would claim the triple promise is, "Tie them about thy neck." The word "continually" is not repeated

but the same constancy is unquestionably to be implied. If the binding of Bible precepts upon the heart is for self invigoration, the tying of them about the neck is the effective means of transmitting this vital animation to others with whom we associate. It is also a gracious and deserving acknowledgement of the Royal Guest in the throne room of the heart. An ornament is never more conspicuous than when worn about the neck. Solomon would have us constantly witnessing of our possession of Heavenly Graces by wearing about our necks the emblem of divine revelation. The New Testament expression of this twofold obligation is the familiar words of Paul in the tenth of Romans, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

When Solomon exhorts us to make of the Bible a necklace he does not mean that we are to parade it in a way which would rob it of its sacredness, but that we are to seek every opportunity to cheerfully avow our faith in its proffered mercies. Under no circumstances are we to permit a blush to mantle our cheeks when we are called Christians nor are we ever to speak with bated breath concerning the things of God, neither should we ever feel called upon to offer an apology for our devotion to this old Book, but should count true religion and a love for the Bible our richest ornament. A man ridiculing Christ and Christianity on a street corner in Liverpool sensed his cosmopolitan audience and believing

that his bold denunciations had cowed any Christians present said, "If anyone has a word for Christ I will give him a chance to speak now." The intimidated believers, not wearing the Diamond Necklace, offered no reply. The death like silence was broken when two young women stepped forward saying, "With your permission, sir, we should like to sing for Him." With sweet appealing tones they sang "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus". The hearty applause which they received was a confession that the professed Christians present had not been wearing the Necklace.

A young man who for a few months had been a faithful member of the church informed his friends of his intention of going to the north woods to secure a position in one of the logging camps. They advised him not to go, warning him of the profanity and godlessness of the lumber-jacks, saying, "They will scoff at your religion and mock your devotions." Disregarding their counsel, he departed as planned, thinking himself equal to any test. Upon his return eighteen months later, his friends asked if he had not found it as they predicted, and how he met the jeers of the irreligious woodsmen. "Yes," said he, "they are a rather tough bunch, but they didn't bother me. I stole a march on them; they did not so much as suspicion that I was a Christian." He was not wearing the Diamond Necklace "continually" and returned home a backslider, just like some you have in this city. This young man disregarded

the admonition of Jesus, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." He put his light under a bushel rather than on a candle stick.

A colporteur distributing Bibles in a mission field was driven from a village whose inhabitants rejected the Book. Determining that he would leave the Bible to speak for itself, he dropped a copy in the street as he was departing. Returning six weeks later to his base of supplies, he again entered the hostile village. The first man to meet him at the city gate detained him with the question, "Are you not the Bible man?" He had every reason to believe that an affirmative answer would bring him severe persecution, but he would not be untrue to his God by concealing the Diamond Necklace. "Yes," said he, "I am the Bible man". "Then welcome to our village; we desire your Book," was the amazing reply. In wonderment he asked, "Are you not the people who a few weeks ago cast stones at me?" "So we did", answered the man, "but a great change has come over us and we all want the Book". A merchant in the village had picked up the Bible from the street, which the colporteur had purposely dropped, and in his economy tore away leaf after leaf to serve as wrappers for groceries and notions purchased at his store. Thus diamonds from this Necklace went into every hut of the village, dispelling pagan darkness by their celestial luster. Because one man had the Word of God tied continually about

his neck, many who had formerly been hostile to Christianity now graced their lives by putting on this Diamond Necklace, and their village became the center of Christian activity. May we earnestly heed Solomon's solicitous appeal and comply with the two-fold condition of the gracious promise by treasuring continually the words of God in our hearts and witnessing at every opportunity for the Lord.

II. WHAT THE BIBLE WILL DO FOR US.

"When thou goest, it shall lead thee." This Book is first to be a guide to the one who has met the conditions of the promise. We must all admit our need of a guide on the unknown pathway of life, and with Jeremiah confess, "Oh, Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walketh to direct his steps." What the compass is to the adventurous mariner, that the Bible is to the prudent pilgrim. Many have been directed by it from the hazardous ways of unbelief into the secure paths of righteousness, verifying the promise, "Whatsoever he doeth, who delights in the law of the Lord, shall prosper." The cross-country traveler who disregards his road map and turns from the pike on the highway, choosing rather the bypath through boggy jungles, is no more irrational than he who prefers to grope his way through the lacerating thickets of unbelief rather than follow this infallible Guide on the highway to heaven.

A country boy entered a city and applied for a

position as clerk in a store. There were many applicants, but he obtained an interview with the proprietor, and was asked to show his recommendation papers. He opened his grip and in looking for a letter from an influential friend, a small Bible dropped out on the floor. "What have you there?" asked the merchant sharply. "The Bible my mother gave me upon leaving home for the city", he calmly replied. "You do not mean to practice the precepts of that Book here in the city, do you?" was the further query. The young man, standing erect, said, "That is the promise I made my mother, sir, and I will keep that promise or return home to her." Absolute sincerity showed in his face and it was impossible to doubt him. "Young man," said the merchant, "you have different credentials than the applicant just preceding you, who drew from his pocket with his letter of introduction two or three cards of a much used deck. I myself am not a Christian, but I appreciate the principles of that Book, and upon your pledge to practice those principles you need no further recommendation; the position is yours." The fidelity of this humble clerk to the Diamond Necklace secured him the position and his loyalty to it won him steady promotion until he became associated as one of the partners of this mercantile firm.

The Mammoth Cave of Kentucky is a stupendous piece of Nature's subterranean architecture. One may walk fourteen miles in this cave without seeing sunlight; the roof in places is one hundred feet high.

There are cascades falling from invisible heights to invisible depths. The darkness is so dense that two sightseers who became lost from their guide were found a few hours later completely demented. Even in the presence of a guide, one feels like holding his breath as he walks across bridges which seem to span the bottomless abyss. A young man, disregarding the admonition of his friends, boasted that he would see this cave alone, that nobody but a coward had need of a guide. He started on his foolhardy adventure carrying in one hand a large ball of cord, one end of which he fastened at the cave's entrance; in the other hand he carried a torch to reveal the wonders of the cave and point out any dangers which he might encounter. The ball grew smaller as he penetrated the deep recesses of the cave. He passed safely and cautiously around and across dangerous places enrapt in wonderment at the marvelous grandeur. His apparent achievement, however, proved a calamity when he stumbled over something at his feet and fell full length, breaking the cord and smothering his light. He was startled at the awful darkness, but braving himself to the situation he reached into his pocket for a match to reproduce the extinguished torch. The dampness of the cave had so moistened his clothing and the matches as to make it utterly impossible to produce light.

What was the bewildered man to do? He crawled about on his hands and knees searching for the

broken cord, enlarging his circle with each round. After what seemed to him an age, the cord was finally found and he started with exceeding caution to follow its path through the impenetrable darkness. The tension had drawn the cord in a more direct line than he had taken in his zigzag course by the aid of his torch, and many times he found himself on the brink of a precipice where one more step would have meant certain death. After many perilous hours, working his way by inches, he finally saw the faint evidences of approaching light, and came at last to the cave's mouth, not the daring black-haired youth who entered the cave unaccompanied, but a nervous wreck whose hair had suddenly turned gray. Trembling with fright and reeling in weakness he went out, not boasting of what he had accomplished but advising that every visitor to the cave should secure a guide. There are indifferent youths who should profit by this young man's sad experience. They defiantly set out to explore their future with the torch of reason and the golden cord of promised years, independent of the proffered Guide who alone knows the pitfalls and liberates the traveler from the jaws of eternal death, lighting his way by the Lamp of His Word to the gates of the Celestial City.

"When thou sleepest it will keep thee." Not only is the Bible an indispensable guide, but it is also an incessant and gracious guardian. The traveler who has been directed with certainty and safety on his way through the day must not be left unguarded

through the watches of the night to the ravages of prowling beasts of prey. It is the privilege of every Christian to be "kept by the power of God." The Lord is as solicitous for His most undeserving child as He was for His vineyard, of which Isaiah heard Him say: "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." David further assures us, "He that keepeth thee will not slumber. * * * The Lord is thy keeper. * * * He shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul." We make none too much of the sustaining and directing presence of the Lord as He journeys with us through the day, but the tendency is to emphasize this to the exclusion of His protecting watchcare over us while we slumber. If in our wakeful hours we but partially comprehend His beneficent acts in our behalf, how can we grasp the extent of His illimitable guardianship of the sleeping child.

In a broader use of the word, sleep is a state of unconsciousness. One cannot at all hours of the day have the Word of God uppermost in his thoughts. The mind is necessarily occupied much of the time with pressing duties. Unseen dangers and unsuspected temptations may arise, but the one who has graced his life by "continually" wearing this Diamond Necklace will at all times be kept. The secretary of the organization of Christian traveling men, known as Gideons, who have placed thousands of Bibles in hotels, received a letter from a young wom-

an stating that the Bible which she found in her room resulted in saving her from a life of shame. She tells of her struggles in the endeavor to elude her tempters, and of picking up the Bible in a downtown Chicago hotel. She opened it at the seventieth Psalm and as she read her courage was renewed and strength was given her to resist the temptation.

Many mothers are giving their sons khaki Testaments in these days when the brave lads are going forth to defend the colors. Many of these boys in reality are, both in training camp and in the trench, "binding them continually upon their hearts and tying them about their necks" and we may be assured that so long as they comply with these conditions the promised Guardian will graciously keep watch over them. In this world crisis which necessitates the giving of our boys to the uncertainties of war this same Guardian who keeps watch over them stands ready to give a like comforting Presence to those back home.

"When thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." In addition to being a guide and guardian, the Bible is a boon companion. The promise is not that it shall preach to thee, nor lecture to thee, but "**talk**"; a very familiar companion is this Book. Neither does it read, "**It shall talk to thee**", nor "**talk at thee**," but "**It shall talk with thee**." The conversation is to be mutual and responsive rather than one-sided and unreciprocal. You have had friends who talked to you and others who talked at you, and in your

absence such friends often talk about you in no complimentary manner. This candid Companion will talk **with** those who have it bound continually upon their hearts and tied about their necks. The Bible is very much like most of its readers, in that what you get out of it depends largely upon the spirit of approach. It is not abnormally sensitive, and is neither offended when its reader makes a breech in rhetorical etiquette, nor when he comes with browned hands and toil-worn garments, but it never opens its treasure to the cold heart of a critic or to the whimsical wish of a curio hunter. It only insists that the one to whom it is to open its heart and speak of the deep things of God shall approach it in a spirit at one with its own. "The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him." This conversant Companion has a message for the sad and weary, for the glad and strong; a message for the faithful believer, the honest doubter, and the sincere seeker for the priceless peace.

A man who was openly opposed to Christianity was incensed when he saw on the center table a Bible which his devout wife had secured from a colporteur. He rebuked her for this personal, extravagant and useless investment. She explained that it had been secured at a very nominal cost and assured him that it was for the home, being as much his as her own. "In that case," said he, "it is one-half mine." "Certainly so," the good wife replied. The enraged man stepped out at the rear door with the

Book in his hand and seizing an ax, laid the Bible on a block and cut it in two. He returned and flung one of the portions at his wife saying, "There is your half and I have mine". He again left the house and threw his half of the Book in the attic of the workshop at the rear of the lot, thinking he had won a decisive victory. The good wife made constant use of her portion of the Necklace, binding it upon her heart and tying it about her neck. After some months there came a period of excessive and continuous rain. The discouraged man was one rainy day looking for something in the attic of his shop and came upon his half of the severed Necklace. He opened the dusty half leaves and found a story that interested him immensely. The story was cut off at the most interesting point and presently he mustered up courage to ask his wife for her half of the Book that he might finish the story. "When thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." He finished the story and continued to read. Finally he said, "Wife, if this Book is true, I'm a sinner." She feared to make any reply. After reading further he said with sincerity and evident emotion, "Wife, if this Book is true, I can be saved." To this she assuringly replied, "I have proven it to be true." The convicted man yielded his heart to the Lord with saving faith and the two rejoiced together. Oh, that we may all continually wear this Diamond Necklace that others, catching its luster, may be won to the Lord.

V

TWO PICTURES IN ONE FRAME

* * * * * *"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
Thou preparest a table before me."*
—Psalm xxiii: 2-5.

The study of art reveals the development of the race in the successful cycles of the past. The catacombs of an antiquated civilization are rich with pictures of oriental life. The masterpieces of the world's greatest painters have been collected in the art museums of every land and are guarded with jealous care as the richest legacy for succeeding generations. Vast fortunes have been invested in some of these collections of art. Some of us have studied for hours paintings of such celebrities as Raphael, Rembrandt and Leonardo, until their living ideas became a part of our lives. No home is so poor but that it has at least some one picture upon the walls telling daily its vivid story to the members of the household. Among our fondest recollections of childhood is a life-like picture in an old walnut frame looking down from the wall upon us. The oldest, highest prized and truest pictures in the world are the word paintings in the art gallery of the Bible. As a map on the walls in a public place shows wear and pencil marks about the home town, so tear stains and finger prints increase about the pictures of the Bible in proportion as they touch our lives.

We have before us this morning a small frame containing two pictures from the hand of a Master Artist; so harmoniously are they blended that it is all but impossible to tell where the one finishes and the other begins. The stone step at the door of the postoffice which for a half century has borne the tread of a million feet does not show usage in comparison with these pictures which have received the tears and kisses of the unnumbered millions who for three thousand years have worshiped at the shrine they grace. May the light of heaven be focused upon them as we once more study their lines and shades, rich with suggestive and inexhaustible meaning.

I. IN GREEN PASTURES.

The first picture is a pastoral scene in the foreground of which we see the Shepherd and his sheep. This has been called "The Shepherd Psalm"; it is equally profitable to think of it as being "The Sheep Psalm." It is not surprising that David the shepherd opens with the words, "The Lord is my Shepherd." The divine title occurs about seven thousand times in the Bible. About one thousand times it is translated "God" and the remaining six thousand times it is rendered "Lord". Does not David run the risk of offending God by likening Him to a shepherd, for no such title had ever been given Him, yet David offers no apology for ascribing Him this humble occupation. God's acceptance of this title was expressed in no uncertain terms four hundred years

later, in the thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy, which concludes "The flock of my pasture are men." Isaiah adopts David's title when he strikes the key of his Messianic prophecy and proclaims, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Jesus was pleased to accept David's title by saying, "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." David does not say, "The Lord is a shepherd"; nor, "**the** shepherd"; neither does he say, "**our** shepherd". Many go that far and say as much but that is not enough. David makes it decidedly personal by saying, "**My** Shepherd". We do not make enough of the "**My's**" of the Bible. "**My**" is the appropriating word. It is only those who say, "The Lord is **my** Shepherd" who can follow David in the next declaration.

"I shall not want." This is the only negative inference in the entire Psalm; all the following are positive declarations. The experience of every Christian should be like that of the little boy who said, "The Lord is my Shepherd and I don't want anything." Why should I want when I have a promise of Him who feeds the ravens and notes the sparrow when it falls, which reads: "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." I shall not want rest, for He maketh me lie down in green pastures. I shall not want refreshment, for He leadeth me beside the still waters. I shall not want

guidance, for He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness. I shall not want companionship, for He accompanies me through the valley of death. I shall not want sustenance, for He prepares a table before me. I shall not want joy, for He anoints my head with oil and fills my cup to overflowing. How can I want, for His goodness and mercy follow me and the silver and the gold are His, the cattle on a thousand hills, and the earth and the fulness thereof?

“He maketh me to lie down.” A knowledge of the needs and habits of sheep serves one well in studying this picture. City people know more about mutton than they do about sheep. David was no butcher; the scene is in a pasture rather than in a meat market. Sheep do not lie down until they have been fed. Until their hunger has been satisfied they go grazing about for food. Sheep do not stop eating long enough to bleat when they are feeding. It is a familiar sound in the springtime to hear the mother sheep calling their lambs without stopping to lose a bite. When sheep have satisfied their hunger they lie down to further masticate their food. That is the figure before us. The first duty of a shepherd is to provide for his flock. David is careful to mention four distinct things that God does for His sheep. Not only does He satisfy their hunger but He leads them beside still waters, He gives restoration and leads them in righteous paths. Some church members talk five minutes and fail to name a single per-

sonal blessing received of the Lord, but David mentions four in less than thirty seconds.

"In green pastures." Nothing is more barren than a closely cropped sheep pasture. Where sheep feed scantily other stock starve. God does not overstock His "commons". There may be hungry sheep belonging to His flock but they are not in His pasture. They have jumped through the bars and are feeding in the world with the devil's goats. Man has no more right to choose his own pasture than sheep have to choose theirs. The food of the Lord's flock is "the sincere milk of the Word", "the finest of the wheat". Countless numbers have fed in these perennial pastures since the days of David, but they ever continue a satisfying portion and the flock is made to lie down in contentment.

"He leadeth me." The life of the sheep, like that of the Christian is filled with activity and David did not fail to get that in this picture. "Oh," says one, "you must be mistaken about this Psalm teaching Christian activity for it is written, 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures'." All very true, and I fear that is just about as far as some professed Christians have ever gone. After one square meal they have lain down and that is the last we hear of them. Yes, David was made to lie down in green pastures, but the Lord did not leave him there long for in the very next sentence we read, "He leadeth me beside the still waters," and a little later he was being led in paths of righteousness. The need of the

church to-day is consecrated enthusiasm and zealous activity, remembering that "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

"Beside the still waters." After being fed a sheep wants water though it is not a water animal. Hence the Good Shepherd selects still waters for His flock rather than the turbulent stream. Not the stagnant, offensive pool but quiet, fresh water. Sheep are not like the unsightly elephant which refused to drink when he saw his repulsive face mirrored in the clear water before him. He lashed the water with his trunk until it was churned into foam and so roiled by the sediments as to hide his appearance and then he drank. It is pathetic to see those who profess to be of the Lord's fold sipping at the polluted pools of society when they might be drinking at the Fountain of Life which sends forth its refreshing flow as clear as crystal.

"He restoreth my soul." Travelers tell us that shepherds of the Orient are much occupied in seeking after straying sheep and healing those which have been at the mercy of ravenous beasts. The Lord said of His flock, in the thirty-fourth of Ezekial, "My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth." Sheep have a very inaccurate sense of direction. A homing pigeon may return from any land under the sun and a dog from the farthest corner of the state, but a sheep at the rear side of a woods pasture often fails to find its fold. Therefore,

God says, "I will seek that which was lost, and bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." No little part of the mission of the Church is the seeking of straying sheep. The shepherd must of necessity be courageous, ever ready to ward off the lurking foe. No one knew this better than David, who once killed a lion and a bear which sought to ravage his flock; and Jesus Himself said: "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep."

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed
through
Ere He found His sheep that was lost."

"In paths of righteousness for His Name's sake." David does not say, "In the path" but "In the paths." As there are many spokes in a wheel so there are many paths of Christian activity. Some emphasize a single virtue until they make it their hobby. With them the sum total of the Christian life may be attendance at the prayer service, or interest in missions, or any one of a score of commendable endeavors to the exclusion of all others. Let us forever cease thinking that the work we do is the only service worthy of favorable mention. We are led beside still waters for personal refreshing but in paths of righteousness for definite service,—not for our deserving but "For His name sake," for the manifestation of His glory and the furtherance of His will concerning us.

You may have seen a shepherd leading his flock

down the heated roadway in midsummer toward a green pasture. The sheep, suffering from the heat and dust, seek shade from the fence by the roadside. They sip at the dirty water in the open ditches and nip at the weeds and dry grass in the fence corners until the shepherd's voice can but faintly be heard as he leads on to better things. Presently his trained dogs are at the heels of the lagging sheep, frightening them on to the shepherd, and soon they enter the green pasture where there is abundance of shade and fresh water. So our Good Shepherd is leading His flock along the dusty pathway of life. Some of the sheep vainly seek comfort in the scanty shade of temporal things, endeavoring to satisfy their hunger by feeding upon the things of the world, while the Lord is desirous of leading them on to where they may have abundant pasture. It is fortunate that we are followed by the trained dogs of a divinely directed Providence which are at our heels when we lag too far in the rear. Sometimes they come in the form of sorrow, giving us pain and fear, and we regard them as some misfortune, when in reality they are but the dogs of a loving Shepherd doing their Master's will in bringing the sheep closer to Him and on to richer things. What a Shepherd is given us in this pastoral picture, feeding and leading His flock and seeking and succoring those who have gone astray—all for “His name’s sake.”

II. IN BANQUET HALL.

The second picture in this familiar frame is a royal scene in the foreground of which we see the Sovereign and His subject. David was not only a shepherd but he was a king as well. The two pictures in this frame contain the essence of his life. So harmonized are they in thought and color that many see only the first, which is perhaps the dominant picture. Those who recognize the dual figure here are not agreed as to where the change falls. The honored expositor, Alexander MacClaren, places the division between the fourth and fifth verses, but I prefer to think the transition is between the third and fourth verses. So unified are these pictures that several verses may aptly be applied to both, but the distinguishing verses are the second and fifth. In the one we see a sheep in green pastures while in the other we see a subject seated at a royal banquet.

"Though I walk through the valley." Is it not significant that he does not quicken his pace when he enters the shadows of the valley? Those of us who were children of the farm and went after sunset to bring the cows from the timbered valley found ourselves running like pursued fawns. The slightest noise suggested the presence of a panther or an equally dangerous beast ready to tear us asunder. But when father or a big brother went with us for the cows we could "walk" through the valley. That accounts for David's lack of haste, God was with him. Mark you,

he is not talking about "a" valley, but "the" valley. We come upon many valleys before we reach "*the*" valley. How we dread the valley of death. There is another helpful word here. David does not say, "Though I walk *into* the valley," but "*through* the valley." I fear we think only of going into the valley of death. We are not only to go into but through this valley. And it is not so far to the other side as we too often think. Certainly the valley of death will be a horror to you if you think only of walking *into* it. The Christian having God as his Sovereign is to walk *through* this valley with One at his side who robbed death of its sting and the grave of its victory. Why wonder that the Psalmist does not flee with fear?

"The shadow of death." Death to David was not more than a shadow. What is there about a shadow that should give one fear? No man was ever bitten by the shadow of a dog and no man ever died from the shadow of a sword. A shadow is only the counterpart of light. Rather than something to be feared it should be to us a source of assurance of light beyond. Death stands athwart the highway in which we travel. The Lord illuminates from Heaven the pathway of His children. When we approach the shadow of death it is but evidence that we are making progress on the journey of life. In Bunyan's dream the valley of the shadow of death lies about midway in the journey of his "Faithful Christian." When the pilgrim sets out it is far in the distance before him but if he is a true Christian this darkness falls behind him long

before the end of the journey is reached. When we walk close to God the darkness which we have always associated with death will become brighter for "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

"I will fear no evil for Thou art with me." The fear of evil is common to man but the presence of God removes that fear. A mother who takes a day's journey on the train with a four-year-old daughter finds that for some hours' the child plays near by, but in the afternoon of the long day may venture to the farthest end of the car. She forms acquaintance there with another little girl with whom she has been exchanging glances for some time. The mother of the second child may ask of the little adventurer, "Whose daughter are you?" To such an inquiry comes the reply, "See, that's my mamma, way down there. She's the goodest mamma; she made this nice new dwess fer me, she did. See, that's my mamma what has that nice wose on her hat, way down there, that's my mamma." Just then the train plunges into a tunnel and the child turns quickly and feels her way along the aisle in the darkness until she reaches her mother's side. When reassured of her identity by receiving the affirmative reply, "Is this you, mamma?" she says, "I ain't a bit afraid, air you, mamma?" As long as the sun was streaming through the car window she could stand off at a distance and speak of her mother but when darkness gathered about her she hurried to her mother's side and talked to her. As darkness

brings a child to its parent so sorrow brings us to God. That is exactly what David put into these pictures. In the former picture, while he was in green pastures, he used always the third person in speaking *of his Shepherd*; but in this picture, when the shadows of death gather about him, he uses the second person and speaks *to his Sovereign*. Many speak most highly *of* God but not having been recently in the shadows, speak entirely too little *to Him*. He permits His subjects to enter no dark valley alone. Whether it be an Egyptian dungeon or a Phillipian prison; a fiery furnace or a den of lions; a martyr's stake or a cannibals' slaughter, He verifies His promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

"Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me." The journey leads not only through the shadowed valley but also up a rugged hillside where passage is only possible to those who climb by the aid of the "Rod and Staff" of His Word. Just over the summit of this hill we come upon a festal table, the preparation of which has been committed to no servant but one which the Lord Himself has made ready. God offers no cold lunch to the slothful but spreads a feast to those who will come into His banqueting house. The father in Luke fifteen wooed the straying son at the swine trough but the feast was prepared at home. God loves the impenitent sinner but only those who seek His mercy are privileged to feast upon the "Bread from Heaven" and hunger nevermore.

"Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over." In the Orient the host frequently anoints his guest with a fragrant perfume and gives him a cup of choice wine, which he is careful to fill until it runs over. The first is designed to show his love and respect and the latter to assure the visitor that while he remains there he will have abundance of everything. This figure of an overflowing cup does not imply that an attendant has been careless in serving but is rather an earnest of God's bountiful supply. If overflowing cups are seldom seen in these modern times, it is no evidence of God's stinting; the reason is to be found within ourselves. No amount of water will fill a pail without a bottom and the old oaken bucket left empty in the sun and wind will leak at the joint of every stave; so our hearts are often rendered unreceptive by the parching elements of worldliness. Even though a vessel be without defect, if left in the open yard during the shower, it receives little water, but if placed under the eaves of the building it will be filled to overflowing. Stagnant water may be found in a half filled vessel but the over running cup gives a refreshing and invigorating flow. The only blessing we impart to others comes from the overflowing of our own hearts. May the Lord help us to keep our hearts receptive and place them under the eaves of the Sanctuary that they may be filled as He sends the showers of blessing upon us.

"Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Goodness to supply every need, but not

goodness alone for we are sinners and need forgiveness; Mercy to forgive every sin but not mercy alone for we need much in addition to foregiveness. God has graciously provided these two white-winged attendants to minister unto every child of the covenant. What consoling assurance that they shall follow us "all the days" of our lives. Dark days as well as bright ones; days of distress as well as days of delight. Always and everywhere the journeying child may hear the music of their comings and receive their celestial benefactions.

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." These words flood this masterpiece with a light that shall never lose its effulgence. What a fitting climax to the two pictures in this frame. In what studio were they painted? Come and see. The artist has green grass beneath him, the quiet waters of assurance at his left, and God standing at his right, a sumptuous table before him, goodness and mercy behind him, the house of God above him and the hope of heaven within. Why marvel that David put so much into these pictures? Why marvel that a four year old lad drives a fractious team when you learn he sits between his father's knees, whose strong hands are ready to grasp the reins at any instant? It appears that the boy is driving. So with these pictures, David held the brush but the unseen hand of God directed its stroke.

This frame hangs between two others by the same Artist. To fully appreciate its pictures they must be studied in the light of the other two. The twenty-

second Psalm contains a picture of the past or unre-generated life, the twenty-fourth Psalm that of the future or glorified life, while the two-fold picture of the twenty-third Psalm is of the present or regenerated life. It is to the other two what meat is to the sandwich. Man has marched across the plains of three thousand years since this Psalm was written. The sling with which David hurled the stone with such cunningness, the harp upon which he played with such deftness, the palace in which he lived and the throne from which he reigned have all gone like decaying timbers, but this Psalm which he wrote is as inspiring as it was the day it came from his pen. These words have charmed more grief to rest than all the philosophy of the world. They have poured more balm and consolation into the heart of the sick than the world's best Samaritans. Pilgrims on their weary journey, sailors amid storms at sea and Christian martyrs have all found comfort in these precious words. Jesus must have lisped them as He knelt at His mother's side, just as untold millions have committed them to heart in youth. Old men and women, young men and maidens, rich men and beggars, kings and slaves, have pillow'd their heads upon these omnipotent, unchangeable words and have swept into glory to meet their Divine Shepherd and Sovereign Lord. May the Lord help us to hang these inspiring pictures on the walls of memory that they may radiate a benediction to those about us until we depart to dwell with the Master Artist forevermore.

VI

ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16.

The entire shelving of the average private library would prove inadequate to contain the volumes that have been written to unfold the truth in this single verse of Scripture, the keynote of which is love. We find in this “Golden text of the Bible” the following suggestive acrostic:

God so loved the world that He gave His
Only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not
Perish, but have
Everlasting
Life.

What is this verse but the Essence of the Gospel? It embraces the thought of God; it sounds the depth of His love; it proclaims the gift of His Son; it considers man, the highest form of creation; it declares the fact of his lost condition and announces the provision by which whosoever will, may have everlasting life. With one stroke of the inspired pen we have flashed before us the thought of God and His mercy, Christ and His mission, man and his destiny, time and eternity. Love has a thousand ways by which she

approaches like a slippered page the holy chamber of the human heart, a few of which we shall consider.

I. LOVE'S PRESENT.

Love will always be found on the giving hand. All love prompts giving, but not all giving is prompted by love. We may give and not love, but we can no more love and not give than the sun can cease shining. When love gives, the best at command is none too good. It will be helpful in studying the love of God to have in mind the love of a mother for her child, for there is nothing in the world that so nearly approaches the love of God as the love of a true mother. In Isaiah's day we hear God asking, "Can a mother forget her child? yea; she may forget, yet I will not forget thee." What will a mother not give for the child she loves? She will lay down her life for that child. Love keeps nothing back, it presents all but never becomes insolvent. It exercises great solicitude and commands us to avoid the very appearance of evil." It has keen forethought and believes that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." It is never so poor but that it finds something to give and presents that gift with such a spirit as to add a value which exceeds its intrinsic worth.

In the Old Testament God proclaims, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," and in the New Testament John affirms, "God is love," but if in these and the hundreds of other passages in the Bible in which His love for man is declared we could not find it ex-

pressed or implied that His love prompted Him to give, there might be some excuse for the slowness with which some accept Jehovah as the God of love. I am glad that in the text we read, "God so loved the world that He *gave*." Here we see Love's Present. Not even a prince like Enoch, a patriarch like Abraham, a governor like Joseph, a lawgiver like Moses, a warrior like Gideon, a judge like Samuel, a king like David, a prophet like Elijah, an interpreter like Daniel, not any one of the martyred hosts, nor the highest archangel in Heaven was worthy to come as a manifestation of God's love to man. He "so loved" that "He gave" the richest gift of Heaven. He went to His own bosom and brought forth His only begotten Son. Not only did He bestow this priceless Present, but He also freely grants the gift of eternal life to those who will accept His beneficence. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." He is more willing to give than we are to receive.

II. LOVE'S PREPARATION.

Love has busy hands and delights itself in preparing for the happiness and well-being of its object. With what delight and untiring labor does a mother make preparation for the happiness of her children. Look in upon a family when the mantle of darkness brings them about the common hearth at the close of a day too short for the performing of its many duties. The father, having been exposed to the chill of the day

enjoys the warm corner with the evening paper, the little children play about the room while the larger ones prepare their lessons for school. Mother is engaged with a piece of work, for the love of her heart always suggests something she can do to add to the comfort and happiness of her children. Other members of the family may retire but mother's work is not done until the clothing of every child is mended for to-morrow's wear; and when those garments are replaced by new ones, with the skill of womankind and the industry of mother-love, she clips away the fragmentary parts of those little dresses that may yet be serviceable and brings them together with an artistic design that leads us to say when we look upon the finished product in the form of a crazy-quilt, "This is the product of love."

We see this mother call her eight year old daughter to her side and say, "Winifred, mother has made this quilt for you. I will put it away and keep it for you until you grow to be a woman. Here, daughter, is a little piece from one of Minnie's dresses, and this is from the dress that Auntie gave you. Here is a piece of Charlie's little waist, and here, a small piece from the last dress little sister wore before she went to live with Jesus." Come with me twenty years later and see this daughter, now herself a mother. Every morning as she dresses the bed her eyes fall upon that work of mother-love. For eight years the industrious hands which made that quilt have been folded and the voice of loving counsel silenced. She can now appreciate

the love of a mother's heart. Every stitch in that quilt is an argument of love; every piece proclaims a message of mother-love more powerful than sermon or song.

So, my brother, in a thousand ways God's love expresses itself in the preparation made for us. In His love for man He prepared the world and so endowed it as to make it most conducive to our good. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Even "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." Turn where you will and your eyes fall upon Nature's living message, "God is love."

III. LOVE'S PERSISTENCE.

The word "surrender" is not found in the vocabulary of love. Enthusiasm dies of age, zeal stumbles with weariness and fatigue, reason loses hope, mercy despairs and faith falters but "Love suffereth long, * * beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; love never faileth." Talk to the mother of a wayward son who knows the truthfulness of the proverb, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." Everybody has given him up as a hopeless wreck,—no, not everybody. She cannot give him up. Love does not know how to quit. She still pleads with him, and each night pours out her soul in prayer for him and in her dreams she

sees that son transformed into a godly man. She sees in him the dutiful son, the honored citizen, the devoted husband, the loving father, all through the efforts of persistent love. "Love never faileth." Love has no end.

The fact that God has not given up the human race is an evidence that He is a God of love. His declaration is "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Man failed in Eden, but love did not give up. He was reproved for his sin and given the promise of a Deliverer. Man failed under the judges, but love did not give up. Prophets were sent and man stoned them, but love did not give up. The Son of God came, the very embodiment of love, and man spat in His face, placed a crown of thorns upon His brow, and crucified Him. Still love did not give up. In the hour of death He prayed, "Father, forgive them": and that same love intercedes for you today. O, my brother, it is love, divine, heaven-born love, that knocks at your heart's door for admission. It is not Justice or she would beat down the door and seize you as her prisoner. It is not Reason, for the oil in her lamp would long since have failed. It is not Mercy alone, for she becomes weary after much delay and may withdraw forever. But it is Love. LOVE! All these years she has been knocking and is knocking now. I pray you, arise and let her in: make Heaven's greatest gift your guest.

IV LOVE'S PERCEPTION.

Love has keen eyes and can see afar off. This may conflict with the time honored proverb that "love is blind," but love has the eyes of an eagle. You wonder what the mother of an untidy, ungainly, unpromising youth sees in him of worth. You have charged that she is blind to his short-comings, when the fact is, no one sees more clearly than she his wrong-doing. She pleads with him to turn from his error and moistens her pillow with salt tears as she implores God to help him reform. The keen vision of her love sees manliness beneath the surface of his faults, while for want of love your eyes are blinded to the qualities of merit which lie dormant in his heart ready to respond to love's touch. We ask with one of old, "Lord, what is man that thou shouldest magnify him and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" Marvel of marvels, that God should see in man that upon which to bestow His love in the gift of Jesus Christ His Son. God can look into the heart of every man who is a fugitive from justice and into the life of the wandering prodigal and into the souls of the poor wretches who revel in the most loathsome sins, and in every life, He, through the vision of His love, sees a winsome soul transformed by His grace. There is some good in every life and love is able to see that good though it be hidden beneath a multitude of repulsive traits.

The four manifestations of love just mentioned are to be seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son. There

is not a single word in the entire story but what assures us that the father loved the younger son with all his heart. Notice first Love's Present. "He divided unto them his living." There was no stinting in that father's gift of love. Second, Love's Preparation. The son had scarcely gone from sight before the father commanded the servants to place a calf in the stall and have everything in readiness for a feast upon the son's return. Shoes were provided, a robe was at hand waiting his coming. There was not a moment from the time the son left home that he could have come and caught love unprepared to receive him. The invitation of our Heavenly Father is, "Come for all things are now ready." Third, Love's Persistence. The son did not come home at the end of a week, for aught we know he did not come at the end of a year, but love was ready, waiting his return. No doubt the servants asked, "Why not kill the calf and have the feast, for he's not coming back?" But the father replied, "Feed on boys." We cannot know how many calves succeeded one another in the stall, but this we do know, Love did not give up. It grew stronger with the delay of time and the calf was there when the son came. Fourth, Love's Perception. If love were blind the story would run something as follows: The returning son finds the father sitting in deep meditation before the open hearth in the old home, and weeps upon his shoulders as he makes his confession, while the bewildered father is unable to recognize his son. But it reads very different, for love is not blind.

“When he was yet a great way off, his father *saw* him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him.” As the love of that father saw the penitent son afar off so the love of God pierces the deepest recesses of every heart. It sees the first impulse that says, “I will arise and go home,” and runs to greet the home bound soul with forgiveness.

V. LOVE'S PROHIBITION.

For those who dislike the word prohibition perhaps I should say love's limitation, or love's standard, or love's requirement. When a neighbor woman is given charge of the home in the absence of the father and mother and she permits the children to play with matches, revolvers, razors and other articles placed under parental prohibition, does it prove that she has a greater love for the children than the parents have? The disbeliever in love's prohibition is yet in the nursery. I recall an experience while but a boy, when mother placed on brother and me new waists, which she had finished making and, kissing us as only a mother can, told how much she loved her boys. An hour later we came in to ask permission to spend the day with schoolmates whose home was a mile away. To our surprise came the positive prohibition: “No boys, I cannot let you go today.” Our further appeal was, “Why can't we go, mother? We've nothing to do, they're good boys and we'll not spoil our new waists”. “Run away now like good little boys and don't bother mother. I worked so late last night to finish your

waists and have a headache and there is so much to do. I cannot let you go to-day", was love's calm but firm reply though no reason was assigned. From past experience we knew that further argument would not change the decision of this court of highest appeals. We went out pouting, boy like, and in our reasoning concluded that mother did not love us. But the philosophy of youth does not change the law of love. "Thou shalt not" is love's declaration.

Where there is no standard, no denial, there is little or no love. Love prescribes a limitation, encircles its object, and prohibits trespassing beyond those bounds. This is true of love between man and man and between God and man. It was the voice of love which said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." "Thou shalt not steal." The enemy said to the two in Eden: "Thou mayest eat of the tree of life," but God had, in love, previously said, "Thou shalt not." It is an evidence to me that "God is Love" when I see that love asserting itself by prohibiting man from engaging in that which to him may seem right, but which Omnipotent Love knows to be destructive to his highest good. Parents may err in denying their children but God makes no mistakes. I pray you, never pass the archway over which God has hung His love banner, "Thou shalt not."

VI LOVE'S PARDON.

Forgiveness is love in full bloom. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Love stands every ready to pardon the penitent offender. Mother said, "I cannot let you go." But we went. You see, it was like this: Father had expressed a desire to know how the wheat at the rear of the farm had stood the winter. There could be no harm in inspecting the wheat and informing father of its condition. And no agricultural experiment station was ever more expert on wheat conditions than were we two boys. So we were soon in the field and finding the wheat unusually good were ready to return with a report as glowing as the one given by the spies, when two boys, our school friends, mounted on the old rail fence called, "Come over." We responded, "We can't come over." "Why can't you come over?" they asked. "'Cause our mother won't let us come over." "Why won't she let you come over?" That we were unable to answer, but some explanation must be made. We were just at that age when our voices were undergoing a change and a strong spring wind was against us. To attempt to converse under these difficulties at so great a distance was liable to permanently affect the voice. We took no chances and in making the explanation joined the boys on the fence.

The subject soon changed, they commented favorably on our new waists and suggested a game. We acted

on the suggestion and time took wings. Noon came and we accepted an invitation to dinner after which we went back to play off the tie game. I was going to say we went home about the middle of the afternoon, but we did not; we were taken home. Our big brother and the hired man came after us in the old spring wagon. As we were being hustled for home in that country patrol, we were convinced that the fun of the day was ended. But to our surprise, when we got home love pardoned. Yes, it did something else first, but bless God, I learned that day how love can pardon. I see by the knowing smile that some of you have had a new waist dusted on the evening of the first day's wear. Love is not only ready to forgive, but has also acquired the art of foregetting. A few days later something went wrong down at the barn and our big brother and the hired man said, "You boys had better go down and see the wheat again." Mother overheard their taunt from the milkhouse where she was slicing cured ham for breakfast, and called to them, "Come boys, that has all been settled. Now I don't want to hear you mention it again." Mother had not only forgiven but had resolved that it must be forgotten. Such is the operation of love.

Here is a wayward son who, spurning the counsel of his mother, has gone deeper and deeper into sin, and brought disgrace upon the family name; his associates have turned him down and he must seclude himself to evade the officers of the law. I see this son at the midnight hour as he returns home from his revel-

ry in sin. He enters his mother's room, tiptoes to her bedside and is surprised to find her awake. Her face is moistened with his tears of repentance as he pathetically asks forgiveness. Before he finishes his confession in which he pours out the dregs of a broken heart, forgiveness is granted. The two affectionately embrace and rejoice together. It matters little how deep into sin we have gone, when we come with a broken and contrite heart to our Heavenly Father, He abundantly pardons; love cannot do otherwise. It is the fixed law of love to forgive the penitent sinner and forget the sin. When we repent God casts our sins behind His back and will remember them against us no more forever. Having love in the heart we too, stand ready to pardon an erring brother when convinced that he is sincere in seeking forgiveness. Until "seventy times seven" love will pardon. In fact, forgiving love is never limited by the multiplication table.

VII. LOVE'S PUNISHMENT.

Finally, love may manifest itself through punishment. This is a hard lesson which all must learn. Happy are they who learn it in early years. I meet some who take exceptions to the fact that God is Love, asserting that a loving God would not punish man. They remind me of a bit of personal experience which differs little from that of the average youth who is reared in a home where love reigns. In the yard of our old farm home in Illinois were cherry trees from the roots of which grew up many sprouts, and it al-

ways seemed to me that mother was particularly fond of cherry. A growth of two years, four feet in length, was nearest her ideal; three weeks' seasoning added to its condition, and it was a fixed custom of the home to have one or more of these ready at hand. In some homes this would be an appropriate motto to hang just above the cherry switch, "I need thee every hour." You must remember Solomon says, "He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

Well do I remember when there had been a violation of some simple law of the home, mother would take the cherry in her right hand and the hand of her offending son in her left, leading him to the rear of the house where she delivered a soul stirring speech. She made no attempt at polished sentences and rhetorical dignity in these speeches, but since becoming a man I have classified them along with the choicest gems of literature. They were brief but to the point and never failed to make "Sin become exceeding sinful". Be this said ever to her loving memory, she never used the switch when there was anger in her heart, and I pray that every parent may have like good judgement. It was difficult to harmonize in my mind how a loving mother could punish her son, yet she assured me that the big end of the stick was more painful than the little end; that it hurt her more to give the correction than it did the son to receive it. I often wished she would change ends with the switch.

In the operation we became very patriotic, she made stripes and I saw stars.

Was not mother right? Time has brought some of us to the big end of the switch, and we now agree with her that there is greater pain in giving than in receiving the punishment of love. While the cherry smarts the erring child for a time it is after all but a tonic and feels good when it quits hurting. An hour later he whistles more sweetly, speaks more politely, obeys more willingly, and invites some task or volunteers to run an errand. His pain is gone and he has been greatly benefited by love's expression. I have been in homes where the little fellows were actually itching for "cherry tea", and the pity is that they should be denied this tonic which would mean so much to their well-being. The mother who has found it necessary to punish an erring child lies awake until a late hour of the night: the pain that comes from the big end of the cherry is gnawing at the vitals of her heart. She hears the corrected child turn in his little bed and goes to him, smooths his troubled brow, kisses his inviting cheek and gently tucks the cover about him. Assuredly love has no joy in punishing the offender, but the fact that it is long-suffering and punishes with discretion, does not invalidate the unchanging law, "I will punish you according to the fruit of your ways, saith the Lord." God takes no delight in punishing evildoers as He assures through His prophet, "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn

from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

The love of God is a vast ocean, the depth of which has never been fathomed, and the circumference not entirely explored; it is the central truth of the Bible, the Essence of the Gospel. Proclaim the love of God throughout the earth. "Let the weary of all lands pillow their heads on the bosom of God's love. Let the timid and the fearful feel the clasp of the arms of God's love. Let the despondent and the sad look out of their darkness at the noontide splendor of God's love. Let the broken hearted and desolate hear the music of the anthem of God's love. **Let the guilty and the conscience-stricken look up from their sin into the compassionate eyes of God's love.** The human heart was made for God's love. It is empty without it, whatever else it may have. It is full with it, whatever else it may lack." I pray you, my friend, open the flood gates of your soul and let the high tide of God's love flow into your heart.

VII

THE TRIUMPHAL CLIMAX

"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—
John 17:4.

Jesus was not spasmodic in His devotion to the cause which brought Him to earth. There was a sublime application to this work during the eighteen silent years, for He emerged from them with the Sermon on the Mount upon His lips. This devotion brought Him from Nazareth to Jerusalem and baptised Him with eloquence. One fifth of the entire Gospel record of this triumphal, climactic Life is occupied in relating events within twenty-four hours of the Cross. Men speak of Alexander the Great, of Charlemagne the Great, and of Napoleon the Great; will you accept the title of Jesus the Great? He was great in His *birth*; so great that Heaven sent its brightest star to illuminate His manger cradle, an angel choir to sing and wise men and shepherds to worship. Our Christmas is but a smile from that Cradle. He was great in His *nature*; so human that He wept with Mary and Martha at the tomb of their brother, so divine that He said, "Lazarus, come forth," and was obeyed. He was great in His *message*; so great that the common people heard Him gladly, wise men and doctors of the law marvelled at His understanding and answers. He always "spake as one having authority." He alone

could say, "I am the resurrection and the life." He was great in His *influence*; so great that He did more in three brief years of His public ministry to make manhood strong and womanhood beautiful than all the philosophers of ancient and modern times. He was great in His *death*; so great that He never shrank from the Cross, and one who stood by and saw Him die "Glorified God, saying, 'certainly this was a righteous man'". May the Spirit of God illuminate our vision and enlighten our minds as we look upon Him in the dying hour.

I. THE CROSS UPON JESUS.

In speaking of His Triumphal Climax, I invite you to come with me and we will pass over the holy ground with Him during these last twenty-four hours. The student of the Crucifixion notices many marvelous things which escape the less observant. All the actors in the drama of the Gospel history appear on the stage in this last scene as if compelled by an inexorable fate. Sadducees and Pharisees, governors and priests, disciples who were loyal to Him, and those who would sell Him for silver, men who loved Him secretly, and women whom nothing daunted, all passed into His light and passing received their judgment. This is not the deft compilation of the writer of fiction, nor the artifice of discerning literature. It is the finger of God. No man with right intelligence, who lays aside all prejudice and eliminates bias from his mind, can tread this holy circuit with the Master, observe how

He was reviled, yet reviled not again, can look upon His pierced hands and hear His seven sentences from the Cross, and come to any other conclusion than that He was more than human, joining those who, witnessing His death, declared, ‘Truly this was the Son of God.’”

These last days have been strenuous ones and now with His disciples He partakes of the Passover Feast. The early evening is spent with them in personal conversation. After giving them the bread and wine, emblems of His broken body and spilled blood, He foretells His crucifixion and how they will all be offended in Him before the morning; then enters the Garden of Gethsmane and stations the disciples to watch in prayer with Him. They being physically exhausted, soon fall asleep, and there He agonizes until great beads of perspiration like as of blood stand upon His brow.

For what does Jesus thus pray? What is the cup from which He seeks to be delivered? Here scholars differ. Some are inclined to think He was praying to be delivered from the Cross, that the humanity of Christ was shrinking from the awful death by crucifixion, and pleading that, if in any other way the world could be saved from sin, He might be spared from this shameful end. Others believe He was praying to be spared from the approaching mob that He might not meet death before reaching the Cross; for He knew a mob knows no bounds, and in fulfillment of His own statement desired to be lifted up as Moses

lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. But neither of these explanations is satisfactory, for did not Jesus say, before leaving the garden, with reference to His defense, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" which means He could have been saved from the mob and delivered from going to the Cross. I do not believe He feared the one nor shrank from the other. The cup from which He prayed to be delivered was something vastly more than is implied in either of these explanations, as we shall presently see.

Then came the betrayal. A band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees came with torches and weapons, Judas Iscariot leading the way, to lay hold upon Him. Jesus voluntarily submitted Himself, requesting Peter to sheathe the sword with which he boldly offered defense, assuring him, in the words above quoted, that at His request, legions of angels would have been sent from the Father. The last thing Jesus did before going to the Cross was to heal a wound inflicted by one of his followers. It must have been about the hour of midnight when they bound Him and led Him away to the Judgment Hall. The mob met with no resistance. Of the friends of Jesus, only Peter and John followed after Him, and they kept at a safe distance.

Next came the trial. It was probably three o'clock in the morning when they led Him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and elders were as-

sembled. "Now the chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death, but found none. At the last came two false witnesses." "But their witness agreed not together". Jesus was then brought before Pilate, the Governor. Pilate "knew that for envy they had delivered Him;" and in fulfillment of the custom of releasing one prisoner at the Passover Feast he chose to release Jesus; but to this the multitude would not consent. There was a succession of trials, six in number; three each in the ecclesiastical and the civil courts, all of which were illegal if for no other reason than the hours at which court was convened.

While these trials were in progress, occurred the denial by Peter, the sad story with which we are quite familiar, and the remorse of Judas. Poor fellow! "When he saw that Jesus was condemned (he) brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders saying, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.'" He then departed and took his own life. This is the witness they should have had before the council. He knew what he was talking about. The determined mob demanded the release of Barabbas; "then Pilate said unto them, 'What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?' They all said unto him, 'Let Him be crucified.' And the governor said, 'Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him. I find in Him **no fault** at all.' But they cried out the more saying, 'Let Him be crucified.'" The governor's wife also called Him a

"Just person," and so He was; but with Pilate's permission, the mob shouted, "On to Calvary".

In derision they cried, "See the king! Ah! if He is a king He must have a robe, so they "stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe." If a king, He must have a crown. "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head." What sort of a king would that be who had no scepter? So they "put a reed in His right hand; and "they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head."

*"The deepest trials that we know
A higher grace discloses;
Men saw the thorns on Jesus' brow,
But angels saw the roses!"*

That was a trying week through which He had just passed. The physical strength of His followers was altogether exhausted as seen in the garden, and Jesus had neither rest nor sleep. What a night that must have been! The evening was spent in the upper room with the disciples, then followed the agony in the garden, then the betrayal and trial, and now our Lord sinks beneath the weight of the heavy cross on which He is to be crucified. The wonder is that He has been able to endure the physical strain and treatment to which He has been subjected. "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him;

and with His stripes we are healed. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth :” He had been much in conversation with His disciples all through the early evening hours, but when the mob laid hold upon Him, scarcely a word He uttered: “He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

He is a great Savior, great in His birth; great in His nature, great in His message, great in His influence, and, marvel of marvels, great in His death. In the shadow of the Cross He deliberately prays, “Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” When they placed the cross upon Jesus His humanity was crushed beneath its weight but murmured not, for He was silent; when they placed Him upon the cross His divinity triumphed over the shame and He spoke seven assuring sentences which I now ask you to hear. I do not know that the order in which they are given is correct, in this we cannot be certain. They are all very short. Three of the seven are prayers and all give evidence that they spring from a heart that is more than human. May the Spirit of God give us in this hour a vision of Him who is fairer than ten thousand and altogether lovely.

II. JESUS UPON THE CROSS.

In the first utterance from the cross we see the spirit of forgiveness. At nine o'clock the cross was lifted into place and Jesus was nailed, hands and feet, to die as the crucified die. The silence of Jesus through all these hours had been the marvel of those who took His life. Soon after the last spike had been driven, the rejoicing mob was silenced by the awe of the scene, for, "sitting down they watched Him there"; "Hark!" says one, "He speaks." What is the first sentence from the cross? It is a prayer. Listen! "Then said Jesus, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'". Luke 23:34.

No word of complaint. No thought of His own suffering; but He pours out His heart to God in behalf of those who took His life. What better evidence than this could any want that He who thus speaks is more than human? What a practical application of His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Jesus never taught what He did not practice. The hardest thing He ever asked us to do He practiced to the last minute of His life. To have censured and condemned those whose hands were dripping with one's own blood, would have been most natural. To have forgiven when forgiveness was earnestly sought would have been the highest act of humanity. But to pray that

those who are yet rejoicing over their heinous crime might be forgiven, is divine. Such a Savior is ours; how can you longer reject Him?

In the second sentence we have His *promised presence*. The cross upon which Jesus was crucified occupied the central position of three. On either side of Him was a thief dying by crucifixion. It is said one of these men "railed on Him". "But the other answering rebuked him saying, 'Dost thou not fear God? We indeed justly suffer; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done nothing amiss.' And he said unto Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.'" Then came the second sentence from the cross; "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43.

Jesus never failed to hear the cry of a penitent sinner, not even in the hour of death. He could only pray the Father to have mercy upon the frenzied mob, but to the penitent thief who sought forgiveness, He opened the gate of paradise into which they were soon to enter. He who heard the cry of a lost soul in an hour when His own life's blood was ebbing away, will hear the cry of the penitent soul to-day, for He is now at the right hand of God to make intercession for us.

In the third sentence from the cross we have the *great transfer*. Jesus before departing made His will. If someone should compile a volume containing the wills of those who have so benevolently and judiciously provided for a thousand charities, it would be a help-

ful book in the hands of all who have the solemn responsibility of disposing of their life's savings. There have been some remarkable wills made of recent years, unique in their brevity and clearness. The will of a recent capitalist conveyed property to the value of one million dollars per word. Our Savior's will contains but seven words. In brevity, clearness and scope it stands without an equal. He was a poor man. At His birth He was placed in a borrowed cradle. When He read in the synagogue, the book was borrowed. A fisherman loaned Him a boat for a pulpit. The only record of His riding tells of the borrowed beast. He had no home, not even a place to lay His head. His first pillow was straw, His last a wreath of thorns. His first companions were cattle. His last, thieves. He was crucified upon another man's cross and buried in another man's tomb. Why need He make a will? He had just one treasure in the world, this He passed on to a friend, and the will of no millionaire ever conveyed more than was transferred by those words of Jesus.

At the noon hour there came a darkness over the earth such as was never before nor since witnessed. Amid the friends gathered at the foot of the cross there stood one kissing His feet and bathing them with her tears, the dearest life in all the earth to Him. Yes, a true mother will follow her son to the cross and a true son will thoughtfully care for his aged mother. We believe this mother was now a widow, age had already begun to manifest itself in infirmity, and Jesus

lovingly provided for her declining days. Our Savior is divine, but He was also human, and every chord of affection was stirred in His heart in thought of His mother. What could He do for her? Happy thought! Here is John, my truest friend; I shall will her to him. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother. * * * When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, 'Woman, behold thy son!' Then saith He to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home." John 19:25-27. Yes, He willed His mother to John. It is a pleasant thought to know that John lived to a very ripe age, and without question he was true to his trust and provided for the mother a good home all the days of her life.

In the fourth sentence we see the *physical suffering* of Jesus. In all these trying hours He has had no thought of His own suffering till now. He has made intercession for His enemies, granted the petition of the penitent thief, and graciously provided for an aged mother, now He offers two words for Himself. Twice in the life of Christ He asked for a personal favor, only twice, notwithstanding He was a poor man. He performed many miracles, but never to meet His physical needs or to add to His personal comforts. He fed the five thousand in the wilderness, but He went forty days without food. I repeat, but twice did He ask a personal favor. He asked for the most common and plentiful thing in all the world, and

was denied both times. We would not deny the most suspicious looking tramp that came with a like request. Who would refuse a drink of water, especially when it would relieve suffering?

Jesus, when weary with His journey, was resting at the well, and asked the woman of Samaria for a drink. She could not understand how He, a Jew, would ask her, a Samaritan, for a drink, and when He spoke to her about the water of life, she ran with joy to the city without granting His request. And now, while on the cross, He says, "I thirst." John 19:28. It is said the loss of blood produces a burning thirst otherwise unequalled. When He suffered thus He asked for water, and those in charge of crucified bodies taunted Him by dipping a sponge into vinegar and offered Him that instead. Thus they thought to intensify His suffering, but He bore it without reproof.

In the fifth sentence on the cross, we see His *spiritual agony*. It was then that He drank the dregs of the cup of our sins. It was then that He bore the burden of all transgression, and He was made to groan beneath the load. It is said that often in the last breath of life, one will speak in his mother tongue, the tongue of his childhood. So Jesus, in agony cried out in the language of the village in which He was reared, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." Mathew 27:46, which means, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was the second of the three prayers on the cross and what could be the meaning of this cry? To me it is clear. I was in a physician's office

some years ago when a father came in with a son who had met with a painful accident. The child was in great distress and it required the father and myself to handle him while the physician was dressing the wound. It was a heart rending scene and just at the most critical moment, when the father's assistance was most needed, he was so affected that he was forced to leave the room. Can I ever forget the lad's cry, "O, papa, come back, stay with me papa, don't leave me, come here papa, don't let 'em hurt me." But the fainting father could not endure the scene, and left the room.

So it seems our heavenly Father could not look upon His only begotten Son when He was vicariously suffering for the sin of the world. He veiled the earth in dense darkness to hide the scene from the view of man, but since darkness hideth not from Him, He withdrew His presence and Jesus suffered alone. It was hard when His disciples forsook Him, but doubly so that the Father, so to speak, passed from the room. **And Jesus**, all alone, bore our sins in His own body. Does not this help explain His agony in the garden the night before? Was not this the cup from which He prayed to be delivered, the withdrawal of the Father's presence? All our sins, sorrows, bereavements, losses and all the agonies of earth and hell were picked up as in one cluster and squeezed into one cup, and that pressed to His lips, until the nauseating, bitter draught was swallowed with a gurgling strangulation. No wonder the earth trembled beneath Him with the load

of sin. No wonder midnight darkness went up to the heavens to close the scene from view. No wonder His perspiration in the garden was as blood.

*"Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan,
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man,
Oh, the gulf that Christ ALONE did span,
At Calvary."*

In the sixth utterance from the cross, we have *victory declared*. Jesus came on a special mission, "To seek and to save that which was lost." We have heard Him say in the words of our text: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And now, after the spiritual agony which we have just considered, we hear Him pronounce victory to the work of salvation by grace in the words, "It is finished." John 19:30. That was a great day in which our nation was born. Great was the joy when Independence was declared, and the Liberty Bell pealed out the good news, having this Scripture inscribed upon her rim of steel: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." But that victorious shout was followed by the scourge of war, before Independence was really attained; and then it was not "Liberty unto all the inhabitants," for there were those bound with the shackles of slavery. Once more was heard the call to arms, and four years of civil war finally gave freedom to all, but still we are in the midst of inequality and favoritism. Not so with the victory declared when the Savior says, "It is finished". Whosoever will may come and take of the water of life

freely. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

In the seventh word from the cross, we have the *Spirit's return*. Here we have the last of the seven utterances, and the third prayer. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Luke 23:46. These are the dying words of Jesus. What could be sweeter? The last words of great men impress us much and we bend over the forms of our departing friends, eager to catch the whispered message; and often that brief sentence from the lips that will nevermore speak, means more to us than the best volume in our libraries, excepting the Book of Life. How sweet and helpful are the parting words of Jesus: "Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit." Having thus spoken, He closed His eyes in death and thus with triumph He met the end. "When the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous man;' and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, feared greatly saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'" If we have walked with Jesus through the last twenty-four hours of His life without bias and prejudice, surely we must all exclaim with Peter, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The mysterious darkness was now lifted from the earth. Then came Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, two prominent men, members of the Sanhedrim, and tenderly lowered the body of Jesus from the cross, embalmed it with a hundred pounds of myrrh

and aloes, wrapped it in clean linen cloth, and laid it in Joseph's new tomb. Thus the greatest life in all the world terminated. The act of Joseph and Nicodemus, together with that of the women who came later to the sepulchre to anoint His body, is very commendable; but how much better, had they followed the act of Mary who anointed Him with spikenard in the home of Simon before the end came. He was pierced with thorns in the morning and laid to rest beneath a wreath of flowers in the evening. He was taunted with vinegar on the cross and bathed with ointment for the tomb. He was deserted when in the hands of a mob, but a host of friends wore a path to His tomb. Do not pierce the heart of a friend with the thorns of sharp words today, for tomorrow you may carry flowers to his grave. Do not crucify afresh the Son of Man to-day, for if not before, you will in the end of life cry to Him for mercy. No greater joy can you bring the Lord than to give Him your heart and live a clean, devoted life. May this meditation of the Triumphal Climax of the life of our Savior, lift us all to higher ground and lead us in all the acts of life to holy endeavor.

VIII

THE PATH OF THE JUST

"Enoch walked with God: and he was not: for God took him."
—Genesis 5:24.

What one word is more descriptive than the all-inclusive word, "Just"? What better fulfillment of the declaration, "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," is to be found than in the breif sketch of the princely life of Enoch? Few studies can be more profitable than the writings of some impartial biographer in which he breathes again the breath of life into some great character. The Bible is largely a book of biographies. Genesis gives a rather detailed account of six men who learned to know and trust God—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph; also a brief sketch of many more early dwellers upon earth who became acquainted with Him, among whom is Enoch. We would, of course, like to have the entire story of this devoted life, but from the brief account given, it seems that God pinned a for-get-me-not on the lapel of his coat, and his three biographers, Moses, Paul and Jude, give as noble an epitaph as was ever chiseled into marble. In the study of this holy companionship with God, let us see some of the many paths of blessing into which it is certain to lead.

I. A PATH OF FELLOWSHIP.

The great characteristic of Enoch's life is that he "walked with God." What a comforting picture of tenderness and sympathy and of divine fellowship is proffered to us in the Bible! And we are assured that it is within the reach of every child of God. What an index of character it is to know with whom one walks! In the brief account which we have of Enoch, pains are taken to assure us that this was not merely a chance occurrence, but rather the habit of his life. The record is, "All the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years, and he walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." We do not go walking with every chance stranger we meet, but usually with those of our more intimate acquaintances and choice friends. The figure used indicates a fellowship at once confidential and sympathetic, such a fellowship as every true child of God is privileged to enjoy.

Many cheat their souls out of one of the sweetest comforts of life by thinking of God as seated high above us, upon a great white throne. They admire Him, and are grateful for His mercy and goodness, and have a deep desire to please Him, but miss the thought of tender fellowship which is illustrated to us in the Word of God in many charming and beautiful pictures. God is represented as walking in the garden in the cool of the day and holding conversation with Adam and Eve, even after their sin. When

Abraham dwelt at Mamre in the desert, God came to him in the guise of a weary traveler, and received food and water from the hand of his servant. And Jesus Christ gives a most comforting view of our relationship to God by declaring that we may enter into a yoke-fellowship walking side by side, bearing the same load, and sharing both the food and the burden of the divine life.

“Enoch walked with God”. As we read the fifth chapter of Genesis, how surprising it is to come upon this humble companion of God. It is like finding a palm tree in the desert sand; it is as unexpected as finding flowers on the tops of the Alps, or strawberries on the summit of the Rockies. Yet we remember that Sodom had its Lot, Egypt its Joseph, and Babylon its Daniel. Likewise the fifth chapter of Genesis which some one has called the “chapter of nobodys”, has its Enoch. Weston was noted for his transcontinental walks, and Blondin for walking a tight rope, but Enoch was noted for walking with God. Few are able at the age of seventy-two, to keep up the pace with Weston of thirty-five miles a day, and it is rare thing to find one who can approximate the feats of Blondin at rope walking, but all may join with Enoch in walking with God. Enoch was one of the few men of the Bible for whom God had no reproof, and “Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Walking with God bespeaks of an acquaintanceship which becomes more intimate with the passing of the years.

We are quite accurately known by the company we keep. You are not left to guess which way a man is headed when you learn the character of his intimate companions. One may be surrounded by very undesirable associates and suffer no ill effect, but when he begins to keep step with them he becomes a part and partner in all their licentiousness. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." This first refrain of the Psalmist expresses a truth that is illustrated by the following story: A man who had a sweet singing canary felt that it was a great pity, when spring came, to keep the poor bird in the house, so he decided to hang the cage under a large tree in the yard, for the summer. This tree was the home of many English sparrows, and before he realized what was taking place the little canary had lost all of its sweet notes. It had spent the summer in bad company, and its sweet song never came back. When it was taken in the house in the fall he heard only its monotonous twitter, twitter, twitter. There are some professing christians who had a beautiful testimony several years ago, but who have lost their witness, and now when they would "speak with the tongues of men and of angels," they "become as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol." They have broken step with God and lost their experience. My prayer is that we may all learn to walk with Him in the path of Christian fellowship.

II. A PATH OF CONSECRATION.

Those who would walk in the path of the just must heed the exhortation, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God". We become more and more like those with whom we walk. I wonder, sister, if when you came home from making that call the other day, the lady said to the members of her family, "Well, Mrs. Church-member was here to-day to see me, and every time she calls, she makes me think of Jesus by her considerate judgment and comforting words." Brother, I wonder if the fellow you sold goods to or traded horses with, told his friends you just made him feel like he was trading with Jesus. I have known some horse traders who made you feel that way while you were trading with them, but in the course of a few hours you had changed your mind about them and the horse too.

He who walks with God will become God-like, ascending in this holy comradeship from the valley to the mountain top where he is given a new vision of life and future destiny. To become God-like one must live and walk in the same altitude with God, spiritually and morally. The man who says he does not believe in God and Christianity is too low down to

appreciate God's altitude. Yuma, Arizona, has a very low altitude and is shut in by lofty mountains, the temperature in summer frequently rising to one hundred twenty-five degrees in the shade. Suppose I should talk to a citizen of that place of the rare, cool air in Colorado, and that from the summit of Pike's Peak one can look to the south, west and north and see snow-capped mountains rising dome above dome for a distance of one hundred and twenty miles, or by facing the east a basket shaped valley sixty miles in diameter, a veritable garden of luxury, is spread out in view. In wonderment he would say, "Nonsense, you can't see mountains one hundred and twenty miles away". And the man who never walks with God in the path of consecration to the summit of Mount Righteousness may look with contempt upon the Bible and the profession of the devoted Christian.

The consecrated Christian life is most beautifully set forth in the third chapter of Paul's letter to the Colossians, which opens with these words, "If ye then be risen with Christ, * * * set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." There are six things said of the consecrated Christian life in this chapter. First, we are told what to put *off*. "Put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth; lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds". The man who lies or holds malice in his heart has broken step with God. We are then told what to put *on*. "Put on the new man, which

is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these put on charity which is the bond of perfectness." It means something to walk with God in the path of consecration. Again, we are told what to put *in*. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, and let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." That is the filling one has when he walks with God. Then we are told what to *do*. Here we have the duties of wives to husbands and husbands to wives; the duties of children to parents and parents to children; the duties of servants to masters and masters to servants. Next we are told *how* this is to be done. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord". In the concluding verses we are told of the *reward* for our services.

When you see professing Christians who would rather be with the ungodly, participating in vulgar stories, than with devoted Christians, look out for their piety; it is only superficial. If you would rather go to a place where Christ is sneered and scoffed at, than where God's people are, there is something radically wrong. When you would rather lock arms and two-step with the devil on the dance floor, than walk the path of purity with God, you have lost all the Christianity you ever had and will never find it again.

until you break step with the devil and meet Christ at Calvary. I pray that we may have the infilling of the Spirit, that henceforth we may walk arm in arm with the Lord in the path of consecration.

III. A PATH OF OBEDIENCE.

Obedience is the price of fellowship and the fruit of consecration. Eight hundred years before Christ, Amos put this interrogation, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Some people seem to act upon the presumption that they have a right to dictate the terms of agreement between themselves and God. It is said of Enoch that he "pleased God," and Jesus could say, "I do always those things that please Him". Jesus walked in the path of obedience and He ever had fellowship with the Father. Where Enoch and Jesus tread we may safely follow. "Not my will, but thine, be done," is the prayer to utter. Of all people to be pitied those who try to keep step with God on Sunday and flirt with the devil the remaining six days of the week come first. They remind me of an old apple tree near my boyhood home which stood at the fence line by the roadside. Its branches spread both into the field and out over the highway. There was always a contention as to whether the fruit of this tree belonged to the farmer or to the public. An unwritten law said it belonged to the one first to club it down. Every boy, big and little, watched to see when the apples were beginning to turn red and then the battle was on. I do not remember ever getting

a ripe apple from that old tree and I was careful to see that everybody else was treated likewise. I never passed but what I saw lodged in its branches a lot of broom handles, gambrel sticks, and old wagon spokes. That tree got more clubbing than a whole orchard. There are many professing Christians who hang out on both sides of the fence, and they receive clubs from every direction. The world doesn't believe in their religion and the Gospel is a goad to the conscience every time they hear a sermon.

Micah gives a beautiful definition of the Christian religion in which there are three requirements, each calling for an act of obedience. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God". According to this last requirement the man who walks with God must not only be obedient but also humble. When you see one who has the big head, put it down that he has lost step and if he doesn't know it he ought to be told, as was a young minister of whom I once heard. He had gone to his new field in the South and was spending his first night in the home of a planter, one of his parishioners. After an evening's talk in which he had set himself well in the limelight he was shown to his room on the second floor. Then little Sammy, a colored lad who had been nodding on the box behind the stove, overheard this conversation: "Well, what do you think of the new parson?" said the planter's wife to her husband. "Oh, I guess he's a right bright fellow, but I fear he has a touch of the

big head and that'll kill anybody," was his reply. Sammy was aroused and sent to bed. Next morning he was asked to go up and call the preacher. He knocked at the door and received a response from within. Presently he knocked again and this time was admitted into the room. "I'se 'fraid you wuz sick dis mornin'! how am yo' haid feelin'?" "What makes you ask that, Sammy? My head is all right as far as I know." "Well, suh, de massa gen'ally knows 'bout dem things an' sayed las' night dat he wuz purty sho' you done hab a tech ob de big haid an' dat would sho' kill you." Sammy took the swelling out of that fellow's head in a minute, and if there are any of that kind of Christians around here, by the help of God, I will try to do as much for them as Sammy did for the new minister.

He who walks with God will become a soul winner. Just now we are especially interested in knowing how we may win men for Christ. "Follow me," said Jesus, "and I will make you to become fishers of men." In every century and in all generations those who stand out as great soul winners are the men and women who walked in the steps of the Savior. The chief concern of all who profess to be followers of the Lord should be to lead their friends to Christ during this meeting. He who caters to the things of the flesh and lightly regards the things of the Spirit, will have no influence for good with the unsaved. It is the height of folly to think you can trot with the cloven hoofed tempter and leave behind you the footprints of a

saint. I pray that we may all humbly follow our Lord in the path of obedience that we may indeed become "fishers of men."

IV. A PATH THAT LEADS TO GLORY.

He who travels in a circle will get nowhere, but he who goes walking with God will reach Heaven at the end of the journey, as assured in the words of the text. He is a great artist who can sketch a human portrait and condense the principal characteristics of a lifetime of public effort into a few brief sentences, and yet make the picture so clear and unique that it stands out, in a great portrait gallery like the Bible, full of abiding interest and comfort to generation after generation. Still more marvelous is it when Enoch's three biographers each take a single stroke using together but sixty-four words. But with all their brevity they do not fail to tell us that he walked the wilderness one day and the promised land the next. "Enoch was not; for God took him." The two disciples on their sad walk to Emmaus had the good fortune of being joined by Jesus. Their sorrow took wings and their hearts were made to burn within them, as He opened to them the Scripture and walked with them in the way. David could say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." We too have His promise to be with us to the end. Some paths may lead to riches and others to honor, but what are they compared to the highway in which we may walk

with God on our way home to Glory; a path which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

When Dewey returned from his victorious achievement, a great reception was planned to welcome his coming to the homeland. Clippings were collected from hundreds of papers which eulogized his farsighted generalship and calm valor and compiled into one great volume. This was presented to the Admiral upon his arrival, as an expression of appreciation from a grateful public. What a book that was! Three feet in length, fifteen inches in thickness and when opened, four feet in width. I wonder if Mr. Dewey ever read it through. How monotonous would become the task of reading the eulogies a thousand times repeated, of one man's shrewdness in a single hour's achievement. There is this, however, to be said of that book, it does not change subjects as often as an unabridged dictionary. As a memento it will undoubtedly be handed down through many generations, but will be of little interest to others than the immediate relatives of the hero. The biography of Napoleon fills thirty-two volumes, while Enoch's three hundred and sixty-five years were portrayed in a brief sketch of only sixty-four words! Every word in his biography covered a period of six years. Think of condensing all the activities and anxieties of six years into a single word. If God were to use like economy in writing something of you, what one word would correctly express the past six years of your life? Would that word be worldliness or spirituality, faith-

less or faithful? For every two words in the biography of Enoch we have one full volume of the life of Napoleon, and for one hour's service Dewey is given one of the largest volumes in the world, while for six years Enoch is given only one word. But I would rather have those sixty-four words written of Enoch as my biography and as my monument than all the volumes that have been written about Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon.

A little boy was detained in a country home one stormy night by some fascinating stories that were being told. Finally he went to the door to start home, but it was so dark he was afraid to go. He asked his associates to go with him, but they too were afraid of the storm. It grew later and he cried, saying, "Oh, I wish I were home!" Presently he brushed back his tears and opened the door as if he would brave the storm, but a flash of blinding lightning and a deafening roar of thunder frightened him back. In a few minutes he went to the window and, looking toward home, his tears dried away and he turned with a smile and said, "Now, I ain't afraid to go home." His friends said, "But it is dark out and still raining." To this he replied, "I ain't afraid of the dark now an' I ain't afraid of the thunder an' the rain, 'cause I see a lantern comin' an' it's my big brother comin' after me. I ain't afraid o' no storm when he holds my hand an' carries a light, for he knows the way home an' nothin' can hurt me when my big brother walks with me." With gladness of heart he joined

his elder brother, who held his little hand and he was soon safe home, where a prepared supper and anxious loved ones awaited his coming.

So may it be with us that, when the night of death comes and we want to go home, and our friends cannot go with us, and we dare not go alone, our Elder Brother, our Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, with whom we have learned to walk, will come out to meet us. In the light of His presence we will go in to join our loved ones awaiting our coming, and find supper ready, the marriage supper of the Lamb. It is a happy journey home when Jesus holds the hand and leads the way.

A little Sunday School girl was telling a playmate the story of Enoch walking with God and she made it clearer than some commentators have been able to do. She said, "God came down to Enoch's house, one day, and they got acquainted and they liked each other so good that when it came time for God to start home, Enoch said, 'I will go a-piece with you.' They walked and walked and talked and enjoyed each other so good, Enoch forgot and went farther than he intended to, and then God said, 'Enoch, we are almost to my house, come and go on home with me, it is so far back to your house.' So Enoch went on up to God's house and he liked to live so good with God that he never com'd to his own house no more." Many of us have been going "part of the way home with God" and some day we will get so near "His House" that we will just go on home with Him and

132 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

dwell there forever. Oh, happy day, at home with God in the "house of many mansions."

IX

THE HALFWAY HOUSE

"They came to Haran, and dwelt there."—Gen. 11: 31.

On a beautiful evening in July a party of ten tourists gather at the base of Pike's Peak to make the ascent during the hours of the night to witness the beautiful sunrise from the summit at the early morning hour. They have reckoned on this climb and think themselves equal to the occasion. With much interest and full confidence the ascent is begun soon after nightfall. Tramp, tramp, tramp, they tread as they climb. Up, up, up, ever higher the trail leads, leaving the lights of the city of Manitou at their feet. After a steady march for some hours, to an altitude that would seem to bring them to the moon, they approach a little station, and the glad word is sent along the line that they have reached the "Summit House." To the surprise and utter disappointment of all they are told by the man in charge of the station that this is what is known as the "Halfway House." "What," asks one of the weary travelers, "does this mean, we are but halfway up?" "It means all of that and more," replies the station keeper, "we call it the Halfway House, but in fact it is not more than two-fifths of the way up. The farthest climb and the steepest grade are yet before you." The party con-

tinues to climb until the summit is reached, just in time to behold the beautiful sunrise.

When the World's Fair was held in Chicago, in 1893, I accompanied my father to the grounds and after seeing some of the most interesting exhibits we decided to ride the Ferris Wheel. It was an imposing thing towering above the surrounding buildings and had attracted my eye and appealed to my boyish spirit of adventure from our first entrance upon the grounds. This wheel accommodated one thousand passengers at once, in its thirty-four spacious cars and carried them to the dreamy height of two hundred eighty-four feet. With other passengers we entered one of the cars and the great wheel began to revolve, lifting us slowly from the crowd of spectators, in its great sweep. Presently we were carried up to a height commanding a view of the entire exposition grounds. Just beyond the grounds was the great lake which appeared to rise like a green hill back from the shore. Several large boats seemed to be ascending that hill or coasting to its foot. The people below us now looked no larger than little children. At last the great wheel came to a stop to admit other passengers in a car that was now at the ground. I said to father, "It has stopped just when we are at the top so we can see everything." "Yes," said he, "I guess we are about to the top." I then looked in the opposite direction and in my surprise said, "Oh, father, look! we can just see over the axle of the wheel." We thought we were at the top, but were only halfway up.

If the ascent of Pike's Peak, or the circuit of the Ferris Wheel seem complete when at the **halfway** place, is it surprising that some of us who have been in the depths of sin should think the ascent to a mountain-top experience with Jesus complete when we have gone only half the distance with our Lord? Many there are who have stopped at the Halfway House, just as we see Abraham in the text, "They came to Haran and dwelt there." May the Spirit of God help every compromised church member to see himself as we look upon Abraham journeying from Chaldea to Canaan.

I. IN CHALDEA WITH KINDRED.

Haran was the halfway place between Chaldea, from whence God called Abraham, and Canaan, the **Land of** Promise. I do not wish to appear in this message to speak lightly of his walk of faith, but I want this audience to see that an absolute surrender to the will of God is necessary to a life of blessing and usefulness. Here we have the Abrahamic Covenant, the most gracious of all God's promises, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." What a promise! We do well to remember that all of God's promises are given upon conditions, sometimes expressed, if not, always clearly implied. Here the conditions were named. They were

four in number: First, "Get thee out of thy country;" Second, "And from thy kindred;" Third, "And from thy father's house;" Fourth, "Unto a land that I will show thee." There could be no misunderstanding God, yet Abraham, like so many of us, lost many golden years expecting God to bless a half surrendered life.

I think of Abraham as being a young man thirty years of age when God called him from Chaldea to Canaan. The Bible record is silent as to his age at the time of his call. I place him at the age of thirty for the following reasons: It was at the age of thirty that the priest entered upon the duties of his holy office; it was at the age of thirty that Jesus entered upon the work of redeeming the world; since God was to make of Abraham a great nation, the call would be given him in early manhood; God always calls in the morning of life that He may have the unbroken service of the years of maturity. If I am right in placing his age at thirty at the time of his call, I want you to see the wasted years before the promise was fulfilled.

Picture Abraham in Cheldea in love with Sarah and hear him tell her of the great promises God has made them. I hear Sarah asking upon what conditions the promises were made and he names them in the order given. She then asks, "Why does God want us to leave Ur of Chaldea? Is not this as good a country as there is in the world? Why leave our kindred and go among strangers? Surely if God

purposes doing great things for us, He can bless us here as well as elsewhere." God did not tell Abraham why He wanted him to leave Chaldea, nor does He always tell us why He would have us do certain things, but this we know that His command has ever been, "Come out from among them and be ye separate." I do not know how long Abraham remained in his country before he complied with the first of the four conditions upon which the promises were given, but if I am right in believing that he was called at the age of thirty, he must have remained there for twenty years and they were certainly not the happiest years of his life. No man is happy when he is trying to live a compromised life before God. Poor Abraham! How his heart must have hungered for the promised blessing. The Lord was to make of him a great nation, he is now fifty years of age and not a child has been given. He would have lived and died a childless man had he not moved out of Chaldea in obedience to God.

Many a church is barren for the reason that she has not separated herself unto God. You ask me, "Why does not the world join the church?" My reply is for the reason that the church has joined the world. It is the problem of the twentieth century to get the church out of Chaldea into Canaan. The solving of this problem would result in the evangelizing of the world. "How many dead have you in this cemetery?" asked a stranger of a sexton of a country churchyard. "Two hundred forty-seven,"

was the reply, "two hundred forty-six people and one church." That church is dead when the individuals of which it is composed have not the "Life more abundant" which Jesus came to give. A colored minister, while conducting the funeral service of one of his parishioners, said, "Brudders, dis har corpse am been a membah ob dis church fo' twenty years." What can the church do with a membership lusting after the flesh pots of Egypt and in league with idol worshipping Chaldea? God told Abraham to go from his country and kindred, but he went not. He calls us from all sin and selfishness, and if we do not turn to Him in an unconditional surrender, we, like Abraham, will have no blessing. Some have been church members for twenty years and are no nearer Heaven than when they started. Oh, that God may help you get out of Chaldea tonight.

II. IN HARAN WITH TERAH.

After this loss of twenty years Abraham must have gone to Sarah and said, "It is evident that God will not bless us until we obey Him. We must leave our country and kindred." At this, Terah, the good old father, likely said, "Abraham, I see you are intent on obeying your God. It must be very hard for you to give up so much. I will make it as easy for you as I can, come now, and I will take you on the journey." The record is, "Terah took Abraham, his son, and Lot and Sarah, and went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan."

This would make it easier for Abraham. But God did not tell him to be taken out of his country. There is a vast difference between going and being taken. I have been to jail a few times, but I have never been taken to jail yet. "*Terah took.*" They had their eyes fixed on the right goal, they set out for Canaan, but think you they got there with an idol worshipper at the lines? How sad, how sad! "*They came to Haran and dwelt there.*"

"We have gone far enough," perhaps Sarah said. "Have we not obeyed the Lord? We are from our country and kindred and surely there is no better place than this fertile valley. Father is very old and the journey has been hard on him. Why need we go farther?" They had been long on the journey for you must remember that they had no Ford. So they dwelt, not camped, but dwelt in Haran. How long, I do not know, but I place their stay there at twenty-five years. They remained until Terah died. "*The days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.*" Certainly so. The worldling whose heart hungers for the flesh pots of Egypt always dies at the halfway house. It took a death to move Abraham out of Haran. There are many in our churches living at the halfway house who will never move on into Canaan until the Messenger of Death visits their homes. It is surprising how a funeral sometimes helps a church. Twenty-five years in Haran and no blessing from the Lord. May we learn the

impossibility of coaxing God to bless us when we have not surrendered without reserve unto Him.

These fruitless years at Haran remind me of the story told of four men who started one evening in a boat to a town twelve miles up the river. They had a keg of liquor with them and when the journey was about half completed they tied the boat to a log and transferred the beer from the keg to themselves until the keg was empty and they were full. Then they took up their oars and began rowing. In their drunken condition they pulled their oars until morning only to find they were still at the same place tied to the log. Poor back-slidden church-member, hitched by the chain of habit to some log of sin, it is a fruitless pretense you make at religion. Cut the chain that holds you and move out to where God can bless you.

Abraham built no altar in Haran. Is your family altar down? Have you ceased praying? Do you no longer delight in God's Book? Have you lost interest in the services of God's house? Have you no hunger for the fellowship of saints? Have you been taking God's name in vain? Are you conformed to the things of this world? Have you no passion for lost souls? Brother, sister, you are dwelling in Haran at the halfway house. Will you not move into Canaan to-night. In one of our campaigns some years ago, an old soldier arose in one of the afternoon services and said, "I want to offer a testimony. Mr. Newlin's sermon the other night on the "Halfway House" brought me to see where I have been living for thirty-five years.

I have passed as a Christian all this time, but I was never in Canaan until that night when I made an unconditional surrender to God. Now I am happy and I have erected a family altar, too, and have promised God to keep the fires burning on that altar the few more days I have to live." It was not long, for in less than a year he was called to Heaven. Some of you are within less than a year of the Judgment and you cannot afford to longer put off the full surrender of your lives to God.

III. IN CANAAN WITH LOT.

After the death and burial of Terah we read that "Abraham took Sarah his wife and Lot, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran: and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan." Abraham has the reins now and is going, rather than being taken, as when Terah led the way. Here we are told that "Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran." If he was but thirty when God called him, forty-five golden years have been lost. They now journey toward the same place to which they started twenty-five years before. Did they reach Canaan this time with the new driver? Yes, "They went forth to go into the Land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came."

Abraham must have been a happy man on that morning when he saw the sun rising over the eastern hills in Canaan. Never happier since the morning of his marriage. He must have turned to Sarah and said,

"Now we have complied with the four conditions upon which the promise of God was given, we can now expect the blessing. We have lost forty-five years by not coming to this place but now that we are here I believe God will keep His promise." Did the Lord's blessing come upon Abraham at this time? No, Abraham was twenty years in Canaan before he heard the laughter of the child of promise in his tent. Why did not God keep His word? There was reason enough for the delay as we shall presently see. If you have not received the pardon from sin as promised of the Lord, it is not God's fault, you have failed to meet the conditions upon which that promise was given. You need not expect God to bless you until you have made a complete surrender to His will. Abraham has something yet to do before he receives the blessing.

The following illustration will help us to see how indispensable it is that we go all the way in our surrender to God. Thirty patriotic citizens took the elevator in the open shaft of the Washington Monument to be lifted to the top of that magnificent piece of masonry standing, five hundred and fifty-five feet high, in memory of the Father of his Country. Seven minutes and a half are required to make the ascent in that elevator. Up, up, up, they were lifted until it seemed they were nearing the sun. Presently one said, "Now we are at the top, I feel the elevator stopping." Then in large figures on the stone before their eyes was this intelligence, "250 Feet." The elevator continued to arise until they reached the top, where

they had a commanding view of the Nation's Capital in every direction of the compass. But they had no more of that view at a height of four hundred and seventy-five feet than they had at one hundred feet. They could see nothing but the granite walls about them. The ascent of that monument is like going up a chimney, you see nothing until you reach the top.

When one pretends to seek God there is little use starting unless he intends to go all the way. Had not God said, "Get thee from thy kindred"? Was not Lot a relative of Abraham? Why need he expect God to fulfill the promise until he separates from Lot? Not the first installment of the seven-fold promise was given until that separation took place. Famine came and Abraham had to journey into Egypt to prevent starvation. We see him later at almost one hundred years of age back in Canaan, but the child of promise has not yet been given. Brother, do you see this truth? I know I am hewing to the line, but when you are dealing with God you will find He always hews to the line. There is no use trying to claim the promise until there has been a surrender without reserve.

I presume some of you are saying, 'He is preaching the second blessing.' If it is any relief to you I will tell you I am not, I am preaching the first blessing. You must know that Abraham has not been blessed yet. Do you ask whether I believe in the second blessing? Yes, I certainly do. But I believe it is impossible to get the second blessing before you have received the first. I believe in the second blessing and in

the third blessing and in innumerable and continuous blessings. But if the Scripture before us teaches any one lesson it is that no blessing will come until we fully obey God. Lot is a type of the world and as long as Abraham had Lot with him he was as completely deprived of the promised blessing as are worldly church members who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. There are churches praying for an "ingathering" when what they need is an "out-going." Oh, lukewarm, backslidden church member, separate yourself from the world and see what God will do for you!

IV. IN CANAAN WITH GOD.

In the thirteenth chapter of Genesis we have the separation of Abraham and Lot, a story with which we are quite familiar. At the fourteenth verse we read, "The Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him—" Everything hinges upon those words, "After that Lot was separated from him." There is no record that God had spoken to Abraham since He had said, "Get thee out of thy country;" he was twenty years in doing that; "And from thy father's house;" he was another twenty-five years in doing that; "Unto a land that I will show thee;" this he did after the death of his father. But God also said, "And from thy kindred." That meant Lot as surely as it meant any other relative. Now that Abraham has separated from Lot the Lord comes to him reaffirming the promise, "Lift up now thine

eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.” The Lord had been waiting sixty-five years for Abraham to get where He could bless him, and at last the glad hour had come.

Abraham must have said, “Stop Lord, why promise this land to my seed, when I am one hundred years old and have no children?” God replies, “I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, for I will give it unto thee.” As soon as Abraham had fully obeyed the Lord, the promise is repeated unto him. We can know that he is in full communion with the Lord now for he “Built an altar there unto the Lord.” He had no altar in Chaldea with his kindred, he had no altar in Haran with Lot, but he soon erected an altar when he was alone with God. Every detail of the covenant was fulfilled just as soon as Abraham removed everything that was between himself and the Lord. God is no respecter of persons, He will bless you as abundantly as He blessed Abraham just as soon as you seek Him with an undivided heart.

In one of our campaigns a few years ago I stepped down one of the aisles, during the invitation service, and spoke to a man who was seated with his family about the center of the tabernacle. I asked him if

he were a Christian man, and he replied that he was just about a half Christian. I then asked how long he had been a half Christian, and he said, "I have been a half Christian for fifteen years." I then asked if being a half Christian satisfied his heart and conscience. To this he replied, "No, sir; my heart is hungry and my conscience calls for more than half Christianity." My next question was, "Do you believe God is pleased with a half Christian?" He answered, "I know God must be displeased and Jesus must be grieved with my half Christianity." I then said, "Brother, you need not answer this question, but I want you to think about it. Do you not believe that being just half a Christian makes one about the most effective agent the devil has in his service?" I turned to walk away, but he said, "I am ready to answer that. I must answer, God being witness, that I believe that a father who lives a half Christianity before his children is one of the most effective agents of the devil." Then I said, "If I had a religion that neither satisfied my heart nor stilled my conscience, that grieved Jesus and displeased God, and made me an effective agent of the devil, I certainly would not sleep with it over night."

Two or three nights later that man came forward and took my hand and said, "Mr. Newlin, I came after the other half." I knew what the man meant and said, "God bless you, brother, the Lord will receive you as graciously as the father in Luke fifteen welcomed his returning son." In a few minutes his wife and chil-

dren were at his side and the whole family were made happy by a definite surrender to the Lord. At the close of the service I said, "Brother, you act as if you received what you came after. Does the half Christianity which you had and the half you received of the Lord tonight make a perfect whole?" He smiled through his tears and replied, "I saw that the Lord's perfect half would not fit in with the dried up, mildewed, no-account half I had, so I just threw my good-for-nothing half away and told God I was through with this half business and asked Him to give me the whole thing. I want you to know I have no patched up affair. I have the Lord's perfect whole, and am resolved to live it to my dying day." I have seen many do just as that man did, and there are thousands of others who have been trying to pass as Christians for years that should do likewise. If this city is to have a gracious revival it must have its beginning with those in the church who are not in fellowship with the Lord. May the Lord help those of you who are at the halfway house to move on into Canaan where you may walk and talk with Jesus!

X

THE STANDARD OF A CHRISTIAN

"He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly: he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high."—Isa. 33: 15.

Every Christian is a sermon in shoes, a walking advertisement of the church. Is it any wonder that the truth preached from the pulpit has so little effect, when some of the membership of the church by their daily lives are an open denial of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus? What reason have the unsaved to expect that religion will do more for them than it has done for you? If there was reason for Jesus saying to Peter, "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren," in this era of social service it is highly essential that one's religious profession bears marks of brotherly helpfulness. Christians are like panes of window glass; if imperfect they attract attention to themselves and obscure the vision; if perfect, others see Jesus through them. Or, changing the figure, Christians are like pianos; grand, square and upright and not worth a picayune unless they are in tune. In this text we are given three couplets setting forth the Old Testament standard of a godly man.

I. HIS WALK AND TALK.

When one becomes a Christian this new life affects every part of him. It operates upon his actions,

thoughts, and wishes, and determines his course in private and public life. One of the first evidences of a true belief in God is a righteous walk. Where formerly six feet of sidewalk would not accommodate his number nines and he frequently collided with a lamp post, he now walks in the straight and narrow way that leads to glory. There are hypocrites who think they can drink a certain beverage on tap in their ice boxes and make the world believe they are Christians. Two drinks of that stuff would make a jack rabbit spit in a bulldog's eye. The man who drinks it spits in God's face. If the path in which you are walking leads to the opera instead of the sanctuary, to the Sunday ball game instead of the services of the church; if it takes you to the brothel instead of the Bible; if it leads to family discord instead of family devotion, you are not walking righteously but are coming short of God's standard of a Christian.

A son learns to keep step with his father and walks like him, in reality he is like him, for one's walk is a revelation of his character. "Look, papa," said a little boy who was following his father after a fresh fall of snow, "I am stepping right in your tracks." Father, what kind of a man will your son become if he follows in your footsteps? Do you keep the path open between your home and the house of God, or have you allowed it to grow shut with hazelbrush? If you are not walking right you are no Christian. Some took a stand for the Lord forty years ago and

are still standing. The text does not say, "He that standeth righteously." It does not say, "He that sitteth righteously," nor does it say, "He that lieth righteously," but it does say, "He that walketh righteously."

There is much in the Bible as to how we should walk. Paul mentions seven walks in his Ephesian letter. We are told how Enoch walked with God and the journey ended in Heaven. When Jesus walked with the two on their way to Emmaus their sorrow was turned into joy. We are exhorted to walk not in the counsel of the ungodly nor to go in the way of Cain, but to follow in the path of the just, which is "as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." If your walk is wrong, you are wrong, and the only way for you to get right is to meet Jesus at the Cross.

No description of man's character is complete which omits his speech. A man who lies, or who is obscene or profane in his talk, is a bad man. A man whose words are arrogant and boastful, cruel and slanderous or deceptive and impure, is no child of God. The grace of God very speedily sweetens one's tongue. If the tongue be set on fire of hell the heart is not on fire of Heaven. The doctor says, "Let me see your tongue," and he judges the symptoms of health or disease thereby. There is no better test of inward character than the use one makes of his tongue. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words

thou shalt be condemned." "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee," is the pronunciamento of God.

A gossiping mouth is the devil's mailbag and there are some who make special deliveries. A gossiping woman entered a newspaper office to exchange news items with the editor. As she leaned against the counter a slip of paper on which was some paste stuck to her back. From here she went down the street, in and out of the stores, creating a hearty laugh as she passed. Upon reaching home she asked her husband what was on her back that ought not to be there. "I see nothing inappropriate," was his reply, and then he had his laugh. The slip of paper on her back had in large type the words, "Daily News." Every city has a few feminine "dailies" whose favorite song is, "Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing." They have slandered everybody in a radius of ten miles with the one tongue they have, what would they do with a thousand such tongues? Gossipers are the social sewerage system of a community. I suppose you have some masculine gossipers here also who do all their thinking between the chin and the nose, if so, you can testify to the worthlessness of their religion.

We have a false philosophy in America. We agree that man's first and highest right is life. The last thing we ask a man to give as a price for crime is to forfeit his life. We agree that man's second right is liberty. The second highest price we ask a man to pay for crime is to forfeit his freedom. When we

approach man's third moral right we come to the parting of the ways. Nine-tenths of the people would affirm that a man's third moral right is ownership; that he is not only entitled to life and liberty, but that he is also to have that which he can call his own, which materially represents his industry and economy. I affirm that ownership is the fourth rather than the third moral right of man. Our fathers in drafting the Declaration of Independence gave certain unalienable rights, as "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Did they mean by the pursuit of happiness the right of ownership only? Certainly not. We agree with Shakespeare:

*"Who steals my purse, steals trash,
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."*

This same truth is expressed by Solomon in these words, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Following life and liberty man's next moral right is to have a just reputation. The man or woman who deliberately goes out and circulates a false report that reflects upon your character is a greater thief than the man who steals a horse from your barn. If one's horse is stolen he can replace it by another, but when robbed of his good name he has lost the whole of his capital. Slander and gossip are the devil's big guns. He seldom takes the life of God's servants or deprives them of liberty, as in

former days, but his chief battering ram now is a lying tongue. The tale bearer is worse than a thief.

Free speech is a precious right, and so is free action, but the tongue has no more right than the hand to abuse its freedom. It is loose at one end and can swing every way, but it is fastened at the other end and that makes you responsible for the way it moves. Nature indicates that the tongue is a dangerous thing by setting it in a vault provided with double shutters, first by a barricade of teeth and then the door of the lips. In the epistle by James we read, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." Paul calls these gossip peddlers "Whisperers," and Solomon says, "A whisperer separateth chief friends." They always have some secret which they charge you not to tell, for the reason they want to be first with it to the ears of others. One of these whisperers was charged with not being able to keep a secret, and he replied, "I could keep it, but the person I told could not." If you belong to the "whispering club" do not call yourself a man much less a Christian. If you do not walk right and talk right you are no child of Grace. May the Lord convict all backslidden, gossiping church members of their sin and lead them to repentance.

II. HIS HEART AND HANDS.

This standard of a Christian would be incomplete if it had no definite word upon the question of gain. God has no displeasure in honestly gained riches, or

He would have denounced the wealth of Abraham and Solomon who accumulated enormous fortunes. He places a premium on industry and commends one for legitimate gain; this is proven by the teaching in the parables of the pounds and talents. He is more displeased with one dirty dime than with the wealth of the Vanderbilts if it be untainted. You may be a church member and rent your property for a saloon or a house of prostitution, but you are no Christian. All gain resulting from such forms of vice is gain of oppressions and meets with God's disapproval. When it comes to receiving profit from questionable sources some have no higher sense of honor than a fox in a hen-house. The man who will in any way become partner to a business that dishonors God and degrades man puts his character and soul on the block and sells out to the devil. This is an age when some allow greed to choke conscience while by trickery they make money by the hods full and try to buy a ticket to Heaven on the installment plan.

In his greed for gain man has come to live on the land like the fish live in the sea, the big ones subsist upon the little ones. Some construe personal liberty to mean personal license, but this text prohibits that interpretation. If you were the only man in the city you could drive your auto through the streets at forty miles per hour, or could build a slaughter house in the park and a fertilizer factory in your front yard, but with several thousand other people here your liberty ends where their rights begin, and your gains

must cease where it means oppression to others. When a man goes to your chicken house and carries home an old rooster, he is called a "dirty thief" and is hustled to jail; when he steals a bank or by trickery wrenches two hundred thousand dollars from the pockets of the common people, we read in the papers that he has gone abroad for his health after "confiscating" funds. Why wink at such a crime? God is no respecter of persons. Instead of being in Europe that rascal ought to be in the penitentiary.

At the close of the Civil War, stockholders of the infamous octopus of the devil, the Louisiana Lottery, approached General Robert E. Lee and tendered him the presidency of the company. Lee was without position, property, or income, but regarded this offer as the gain of oppression, and on the ground that he did not understand the business and did not care to learn it, he modestly declined the proposition. They then said, "No experience is needed. We know how to run the business. We want you as president for the influence of your name, remember the salary is twenty-five thousand dollars a year." Lee arose and buttoned his old gray coat over his manly breast and replied, "Gentlemen, my home at Arlington Heights is gone, I am a poor man and my people are in need. My name and influence are all I have left and they are not for sale at any price." Rather than receive the gain of oppression, he taught the young men of the south the principles of right living at a salary of one thousand dollars a year.

The hands join the heart in offering or receiving bribes. Some think of bribery as being a new sin which had its origin in the twentieth century. If such ones would only read the Bible they would find it a decidedly up-to-date Book. Samuel says of his two sons who became judges, "They took bribes and perverted judgment." David says of some of his pursuers, "Their right hand is full of bribes." Amos says of some men in his day, "They take a bribe and turn aside the poor in the gate." In the book of Job we have the crushing bolts of God's indignation, declaring, "Fire shall consume the tabernacle of bribery." This is one of the devil's most effective temptations. He tried it on Jesus, saying, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But Jesus did not yield to that temptation. Paul also faced the temptation of giving a bribe. For two full years he was held a prisoner by Felix and it is expressly said, "He hoped also that money should have been given of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him." But rather than stain his hands by offering a bribe Paul remained in prison.

Bribery is a sin that sticks, but a Christian will shake it off with indignation. He will neither take what is offered nor keep what is given. Men are offered advantages if they will wink at evil or frown on good. He whose hands clutch the reward of a sinful trade, or a dishonest transaction, he who receives gain by countenancing wrong, or forbearing

from right, does not measure up to God's standard of a Christian. Only clean hands go with a pure heart. The blackest chapter in English, Irish, French, German and American politics is the chapter of bribery. Yielding to this temptation Benedict Arnold sold the fort in the Highlands for thirty-one thousand five hundred seventy-five dollars; Gorgey betrayed Hungary; Ahithophel forsook David and Judas kissed Christ. It is said, "Every man has his price;" this I do not believe but there are some who hold bargain sales. When one sees so many of the illustrious going down under this temptation, he is reminded of the red dragon spoken of in Revelation with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns drawing the third part of the stars of heaven down after him. May the Spirit of God so prick the consciences of men as to lead them to place manhood above money, and in their business despise the gain of oppression and shake their hands from holding of bribes.

III. HIS EARS AND EYES.

The righteous man "stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood." He is deaf to news which would never come from a good man's lips. Half that was said as to the use of the tongue will apply here for he that listens to the defaming of a good man, with such relish as to invite the story at length, is partner to the crime. Profanity and vulgarity are twin brothers and are always employed by satan in haunts of vice and crime. He sends brazen ambassadors to deliver

their poisonous message in the ears of the innocent and pure, but against their story of blood Christian men stop their ears. Hearing has as much to do with the health of the soul as food has with the body. The Christian places an embargo upon unclean conversation and corrupt literature. If an angel from Heaven were to come down to your parlors and read the novels that some of you church members have been reading, and sing the trashy songs that some of you have been singing, and listen to the suggestive, smutty stories to which some of you have listened with relish, he would never get back to sing again in Gabriel's choir. Neither will you sing in that choir if you do not burn up some of your books and songs and close your ears to ill savored stories and repent of your sin. When you buy a cheap novel you get ten cents worth of unadulterated perdition.

The reason some people hear so much is because their ready hearing invited the extra chapters. It is not only our duty to close our ears against speech that is evil, but as far as possible to close the lips of all whose message would bring a blush to the cheek of an angel. It takes a good listener to add zest to a story. We would do well to adopt the covenant of the Bethany Girls, which reads, "I will not have ears for that evil report about another, which I would grieve to have another hearken to about myself. I will not have a tongue for that frailty of another, which, if my own, I would crave to have sheltered in kindly silence. I will not have eyes for that error

of another, which I would long to have go unnoticed in myself." I like that pledge because it breathes the spirit of Jesus.

The description of a Christian given in the text begins with his feet and concludes with his eyes and includes the entire man. "He that shutteth his eyes from seeing evil shall dwell on high." A Christian takes no pleasure in the most brilliant displays of folly. He does not seek his amusement in gazing upon denized wickedness; he will see only that which is clean and helpful to his best good. Through the eye gate the devil is making a big catch these days with gaudy apparel, suggestive pictures and lewd performances. He has just about captured everything in the amusement world from the moving picture and matinee to the vaudeville and grand opera. The next time you start to the ball room, the theater or any other form of questionable amusement push your minister in thirty minutes ahead of you and see how he looks before you enter. Before you put beer in your ice box or the euchre deck in your parlor, put them in the home of your pastor and see how he looks mixed up with the devil's side dishes. He has as much right to run to a "seventh commandment" show and to the dance and to have nude pictures in his home as you have, but he would be as good-for-nothing as you are if he did. God expects everyone to be as good as he wants his pastor to be. If a minister were to run to everything that some church members do he would have to leave town within twenty

ty-three days. There are those who flock to the theater to see some actress perform who hasn't clothes enough to dress a ten-pound baby and call it "high art." My conception of art is something different than going to the theater and looking through a pair of opera glasses at the form of some degenerate.

If my rebuke of sin seems shocking your life has been more so. I do not believe in labeling a bottle of rank poison "essence of peppermint." So long as people sin in English I do not propose to reprove them in Latin. Some say, "Of course, we want you to preach the truth, but can't you put on the soft pedals, so it won't hurt so much?" That is the trouble now, too many have gone into the soft-pedal business when they go out to fight the devil. We must fight the devil like the man who fought a bulldog with the tangs of a pitchfork. The owner of the dog insisted that he should have used the other end of the fork if he must come at his dog with that kind of a weapon. The man replied, "I will use the other end of the fork when he comes at me with the other end." I was once asked to preach a very pleasing sermon, the request came from a woman who said, "My husband has not been to church for six years because the last time he went the minister said something that hurt his feelings, he has consented to come with me tonight and I am so afraid he will get his feelings hurt again." How is a man who has his feelings stuck out like porcupine quills to keep them from getting hurt when you prod sin hard enough to arouse the man who is elephant-

like in insensitiveness? Some people are so non-combustible you can build a fire around them and they will not explode, while you dare not go within ten feet of others with a lighted match or they will take fire like a powder mill. The man who howls like a hit pup when I preach the truth assures me that I have called his number. A sound horse will always stand currying, but if it has the spavin, it will stamp and kick and bite when you scratch the sore. I am here to arouse the backslidden church member and get him back into favor with God.

For evidence that many church members and some ministers do not measure up to God's standard of a Christian by shutting their eyes from seeing evil, we only need turn to the Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago. Church members by the hundred were witnessing a play and almost the entire membership of one Chicago church met death in that fire trap because their eyes were open to evil. The scene being acted out when the fire occurred was enough to make a harlot blush. The advertisements of that play remained on the billboards of the city for several days and the pictured play showed a group of fifty or more women nearly nude. With eyes open to seeing evil six hundred souls, among them many church members and a few pastors, went into eternity. I venture there are some in this audience who have had eyes open to evils that you would not want to be caught witnessing when Gabriel comes to summon you to meet God. I can no more think of a spiritually minded person running to the

theater or dance than I can think of the Prodigal Son asking for a dish of husks from the swine trough at his father's banquet.

If I had a blackboard here and were to draw upon it a large cross and were to write upon the left of that cross the things which belong to the unregenerate life and upon the right the things which belong to the spiritual life, there would be no doubt in any mind but that upon the left should be written the "world," the "flesh" and the "devil." All would be equally certain that upon the right should be written the "church," spirituality" and "Jesus." Now I ask you upon which side of that cross belong the theater, the dance, cards and all questionable amusements?

- Your better judgment tells you that they belong upon the left side for they have nothing in common with the Christian life. I want every wife who will say, "My husband shall have a more consecrated wife," every mother who will say, "God helping me, my children shall have a better mother," every man who will say, "My wife and children and mother shall have a better husband and father and son," and every church member who will say, "God helping me, I will live up to the standard of a true Christian," to arise. If you are as good as you want to be keep your seats, the devil will take you as you are, if he doesn't like some of your meanness. May God help you to turn from all things that hinder your Christian influence and stifle your Spiritual growth that you may attain the "Stature of the fullness of Christ."

XI

CHRISTIAN POISE

"Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man."
—I Kings 2:2

Every person has a favorite study. The astronomer lives in the heavens, his converse is with the stars. The geologist descends to examine the rocks and strata, his thoughts are of the primitive formations. The botanist, fragrant with flowers, comes with a portfolio full of autographs of the Creator. The machinist is all absorbed with the delicate mechanism of his inventions. The statesman is devoted to the industrial and economic problems in government. But one of the most interesting and profitable studies is that of character. Here the student of nature will find the star of hope in the thought firmament, the rock of faith in the spirit land and the flower of love in the heart garden. No machinist ever saw an engine hitched to a moving train, housed beneath the hood of an auto or imprisoned in the intricate parts of an aeroplane that equaled in fervor and power the throb of a human heart. The governing of a republic is not a greater task than the ruling of the heart realm, for "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." The dethroning of satan and the enthroning of Jesus is employment worthy of the most gifted intellect.

We have before us the last admonition of a father

to his son; an exhortation breathing parental solicitude for the character and poise of the forthcoming king. "Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon, his son, saying, "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God to walk in His ways: that the Lord may continue His word which He spoke concerning me, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee, said He, a man on the throne of Israel." A man should everywhere and at all times manifest Christian poise, especially if he is to be a leader of men, a guardian of state. It is a most reasonable thing to expect men to be manly, but we so often fall short of the kingly grace that God's repeated call is: "Show thyself a man." I have in mind five classes of men which may be best understood by studying them together with five rivers possessing similar characteristics.

I. THE RUSHING JORDAN.

Take the familiar river of the Bible, the Jordan, and see how aptly it illustrates a class of men. This stream has its source in the snow-capped hills of Mount Hermon, and from this constant supply of fresh waters soon becomes a river of considerable volume for its length. Had these waters chosen to flow eastward they would soon have lost their identity in the great Euphrates. Their flow northward was made impos-

sible by the Lebanon Mountains, and to have chosen a westward course would soon have lost them in the Mediterranean. They choose a southward course and flow through gorge and over cataract, onward, swiftly onward, in their own peculiar channel, toward a hasty and unparalleled goal. After dancing down the mountain until sea level is reached they come to a sudden halt at the little lake of Merom. Discontent soon bids them move onward. Leaping through rapids and dashing over rocky shoals until churned into foam they again pause in the waters of Galilee, more than six hundred feet below the level of the sea. They are here encircled by shores honored and made sacred by the presence of the Galilean fishermen, including Him who came to teach us how to become fishers of men. Once more they break forth with rapid flow and dash along their crooked course, dancing down, down to thirteen hundred feet below sea-level, where they reach the end toward which they made undue haste. What a descent from Hermon's summit to the Dead Sea, the deepest depression in all the world!

How like the Jordan river is the course of some men. We see them on the lofty hills of youth, facing exceptional possibilities. The spirit of the age is to choose a short road to reach a given end, regardless of the rapid dash which may thus be necessitated. The strenuous life appeals to the vigorous youth and animates him with a zeal which is often void of knowledge. This overanxiety is possessed not by the young alone, but is prevalent among all classes in these modern

times, and has become the warp and woof in the fabric of business activity. Disregarding the laws of human endurance and exceeding the bounds of reason, there are those who plunge on with an over-anxious desire to acquire wealth or to gain recognition among their contemporaries as the possessors of superior talents. They, like the river that so accurately duplicates their course, reach a pause or breathing place which is their "Merom," then rush onward again in a spasmodic dash until some "Sea of Galilee" affords needed rest. Once more they bound forth until a "Dead Sea" marks their untimely and fatal end. We do well to know that the way to success is not down a toboggan slide but up a ladder. There are those who have the auspicious beginning of their career from the lofty summit of some "Mount Everest," the topmost roof of the world, and soon finish up in the sub-cellars of a "Dead Sea."

A high and fixed purpose should dominate every life, and an earnest, persistent effort should be made to reach that goal; but great care should be exercised lest we become overzealous to reach the end, and break forth at Jordan speed soon to drop in some lifeless pit. Toil on, but let patience have her perfect work. What gain is there in attempting to add two hours to each end of the day, or adding the seventh working day to the week? What advantage is there in trying to do two men's work? He who would crowd two days into one is much like the man who was trying to cross his bees with lightning bugs so they could

work day and night. He who thus forces his days has lived out his three-score years and ten at the age of thirty-five and at his Jordan speed may at that age rush into the sea of death. Jordan-like youths plunge into business life with an unfinished education. Jordan politicians would undo laws calculated to bring us future good, and enact such laws as would hasten us on our flow in a vain show to-day, though they bring us to a Dead Sea to-morrow. Great men have been content to use sane methods, and wait long to see permanent results. There may be an elevator to the top floor of success, but it is generally out of commission. The stairway is still popular and always safe. You, who stand in the golden gateway of the dawn, and see the years before you like a fruitful country at your feet ripe for conquest, avoid all attempts at repeating the story of the Jordan. I exhort you to profit by Paul's admonition to the Philippians: "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

II. THE VACILLATING CASIQUIARE.

In South America there is a little stream known as the Casiquire, an affluent to both the Orinoco and the Amazon. This little river affords a striking contrast to that of the Jordan. Instead of being so over-anxious in attaining a fixed purpose, it yields to the slightest influence. This river is at the Equator, where thunder showers occur daily. When there has been a heavy rainfall in the Amazon district, it flows into the Orinoco, and when the precipitation is heavier

in the Orinoco valley it flows toward the Amazon. What an obliging river, but how void of purpose! How like the weather vane that adjusts itself to every wind! There is but one Casiquiare river in all the world, yesterday it flowed southward, to-day it flows northward, who knows which way it will flow to-morrow?

There are those who belong to this Casiquiare class, possessing no definite purpose, void of conviction, with no minds to think for themselves. When they hear a lecture or concert they wait until they see the morning paper before they endorse or criticize. They are religious to-day and profane to-morrow; republicans one day and democrats the next. Like lost dogs they will follow anybody ready to make him their master. They choose the popular side of every issue regardless of merits. They are like the chameleon, which makes a fair attempt to become the color of whatever object it chances to be upon. One finds as much difficulty in classifying such people as did the Irishman in accounting for his pig. Pat was sent by his master with a fat pig in a poke as a present to the priest. He stopped at a saloon on the way for a glass of beer. While there some bums removed the pig and put a pup in the poke. The priest was insulted when he saw the pup and refused to accept the gift. Pat returning, stopped again at the saloon. This time the bums removed the pup and replaced the pig. Upon his arrival he said to his master, "Shure an' that pig's a pup an' the praste will have none of yer prisenent."

When he opened the poke and saw the pig he said, "Begorra, I wish you be pig all the toime or pup all the toime, so I know what you be anyhow."

This Casiquiare, turn-coat spirit is rife in the land. Here is a man who starts to live with some woman as his wife and to-morrow divorces her in the hope of getting another. This class of people is like the hound which chased a deer until a fox crossed his path and then pursued it until a hare jumped out of the grass, then followed it. When the master came upon the hound he was barking at a hole in the ground into which he had run a mouse. You may laugh at this hound, but I have seen men and women who pretended to be seeking the "Pearl of great price" show up two weeks later with a dirty dime novel or a stinking demijohn. Such people remind me of the man who, on his word that he was an engineer, was employed as hostler in the time of a railroad strike. He mounted an engine and opened the throttle to drive into the roundhouse. To prevent running through the wall at the farther side, he threw the reverse lever and the engine rushed back. Again he changed the lever and the engine shot into the building as before. Once more he threw the reverse and this time the engine shot back over the turntable into the yards. The foreman asked, "Why didn't you stop her in the barn?" The man replied, "I had her in twice, why didn't you shut the door?"

Happy is he who can "become all things to all men" if in that he retains his own individuality and exerts

a positive influence for good. There is a vast difference between this chameleon-like, Casiquiare, vacillating class, and the sort of man that Paul became when he was "all things to all men." If your life stream flows southward, to the fisherman become a stream abounding in fish, but when he throws in his line see to it that his cork drifts southward; to the raftsman let your surface be smooth and your channel deep, but convince him that if he launches his raft it will be carried ever southward; afford the miller a site along your bank for his mill, but leave him not in doubt as to which end of the race to set his mill; congeal your surface for the skater, but let there be beneath the ice a constant southward current.

III. THE DISAPPEARING HUMBOLDT.

The Humboldt is the largest river in Nevada. It is fed by the melting snow from surrounding mountains and traverses the state but is not even navigable by canoes. The waters of its tributaries come dashing down the mountain side and give promise of a great river when all united, but they soon disappear in the sands of the Humboldt's bed. Cross this river just below an affluent and the water flows wide and deep; cross it again some miles below and it flows narrow and shallow; cross it once more farther down and it disappears altogether. What a contrast between this disappearing river and the two we have just considered. Unlike the Jordan, in that it is not over-anxious to reach its goal, and unlike the Casiquiare,

in that though hidden beneath the sands of its bed it continues on its determined course, never retracing itself, yet falls far short of an ideal stream.

There are some who remind us of the disappearing Humboldt, those who are all for appearance, who are all front door. Open the door and you are in the back yard. Upon these people you cannot depend. They promise fair to-day, but to-morrow sink in the sands of irresponsibility. They are like the Ephraimites of old, who sank in the sands of obscurity until Gideon and his three hundred put the Midianites to flight, then came forth expressing their desire to help; men like those Israelites who hid themselves in the mountains until Jonathan and his faithful armor-bearer smote the Philistines' garrison, then came from their hiding and followed hard after them in battle. How often do we find that those upon whom we relied have disappeared like the subterranean river. There are Humboldt-like politicians who flow at flood tide just preceding election day and later, when in the discharge of official duties, sink in the sands of irresponsibility and hide beneath the slightest technicality. He who promises much and does little or nothing is the shifting sand of the river bed, while the highest compliment to be paid a man is that he constantly does more for his friends and generation than they could reasonably expect.

There are those who were pillars in some country or village church, but when they moved into the city became pillow-shams, or caterpillars, and carried a

church letter in a trunk for ten years rather than become affiliated with the church and contribute to the success of the greatest institution in the world. Come, my brother, "show thyself a man." Unfurl the banner of truth and carry it always at full mast. Do not permit the sacred emblem to trail in the dust of indifference. During Lent some people live like millennial citizens, but after Easter take down the decorations and stack the gilded lettering "He Is Risen," behind the coal bin in the church basement and crave the flesh pots of Egypt the rest of the year. Some will never reach Heaven unless they die during Lent. I believe in a Lent that is kept three hundred and sixty-five days in the year for Jesus. Be not a Jonah when a Nineveh is to be warned. Be a Samuel who with perfect poise reproves Eli, the priest, and Saul, the king. If you are an Elijah to-day successfully calling the challenge of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, and serve a God who answers by fire, see to it that you are not under some "juniper tree" to-morrow. Be a Daniel, though forced into exile or made the companion of lions. Be a Joseph and stand firm with God for the right whether in a dungeon or on a throne, "Show thyself a man."

IV. THE SUBDIVIDING NILE.

The Nile is the largest river in the world that flows northward. It was in the attempt to discover the source of this river that the venerable African missionary, Livingstone, met his lamented death. From

the deep recesses of the extreme interior of Africa this river flows through a valley rich in the history of yesterdays. For hundreds of miles it receives no tributaries, finally, so heavily freighted with alluvial deposit, it builds many deltas which divide its channel into a multitude of lesser ones. The entire volume of all these streamlets cannot exceed the flow of the upper United Nile. However valuable the lower Nile may be in giving its rich deposit at flood time, if the rivers were anointing a king to reign over them, the Nile with its multiplied streamlets would be looked upon as a mockery and a weakling in the river kingdom.

Many men there are who, like the Nile, spring forth in youth from an unknown source in some obscure wilderness, and flow down through the valley of middle life in one vast volume, freighted with those talents which count in the field of human greatness. But alas! Great men often become weaklings by so dividing their energies as to meet defeat at every turn. Concentration is like banks to a river which increases the current for the mill-wheel. Rushing between its banks, the Rhine has power through its confinement; spreading out over the plains of northern Germany it is a mere marsh, laden with miasma. The guide's lantern burns dim, while the lightning blinds you as it flashes across the midnight sky, but for the purpose of consulting your road map, a tallow candle is worth a sky full of lightning. Luther was not the unchained lightning when he nailed his thesis on the door of

the church in Wittenberg but the concentrated flame of the arc lamp by the light of which all the world could read.

The typical Nile-like man would be at the same time a lawyer, physician, auctioneer, inventor, at the head of a great business, hold public office, publish a newspaper, be an architect, a sculptor, undertaker, banker, farmer, president of a mining company, conduct a courtship episode, and to cap it all off, become a "one horse" preacher. Someone ought to send a man like that the recipe a Nimrod paid a dollar for to prevent his shotgun from scattering, which read, "Just put in one shot." He who chases two hares will catch neither, but the swiftest deer will surrender the chase to the one who follows on in a persistent, definite pursuit. Consecrated purpose has been the imperial judge who bestowed the badge of victory upon all who have achieved in the affairs of human progress.

The determined youth of Spain may be termed a dreamer, but with undaunted faith in the face of defeat he toiled on, and after the lapse of years kissed the soil of a new continent, now the home of happy millions. If in the temple of endeavor we would find the key to unlock the door of the room in which is found the golden altar, "Success," we must be able to say with Paul: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus." We must with David say, "One thing have

I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after." Only those who thus seek will find. The butterfly is a thing of beauty as it flits about every shrub in the garden, but the bee that contents himself with the one rose bush and goes deep into the blossom to receive its sweets alone has honey enough and to spare. Your ancestors were more than the caterpillar, higher yet than the brood of the honey-comb; you are endowed with talents which make it imperative that you show yourselves men.

V. THE ONFLOWING MISSISSIPPI.

Perhaps of all rivers the Mississippi affords the most fitting illustration of a well balanced life. A little schoolboy once asked his father, "If the Mississippi is the Father of Waters why don't we call it Mr. Sippi?" The name or gender of this river may confuse a youth, but here is a magnificent stream differing much from the Jordan, in that it is noted for its gentle flow, the absence of rapids and falls. Differing much from the Casiquiare, in that it does have a fixed and definite course, not over-anxious to reach its end, but moves continuously on free from lakes and eddies. Differing, too, from the Humboldt for its flow is uniform, augmented by each succeeding affluent on its way to the Gulf. Differing, also, from the Nile, though not entirely free from deltas. Its great channel rolls out into the Gulf and ocean welcoming the ships of trade to its bosom and carries far inland, to the greatest string of cities on a single

river system in the world, the necessities and luxuries of life. Flow on, great stream, flow on! King thou art of all the rivers, sovereign of the most fertile valley in all the world. Thy banks are lined by the arteries of commerce throbbing with the essence of life; thou art spanned by a hundred bridges, each of which is a gateway leading to the land of plenty. Flow on, and may the millions of thy industrious and prosperous subjects give of their surplus to feed the hungry of the world! Flow on, and may thy gentle murmur speak as the voice of God to every indifferent and slumbering soul and bid him, "Arise, show thyself a man."

Possessor of a commodity offered in the exchange of trade, though others water stock and make cotton appear as wool, be honest, "Show thyself a man." Servant of the people in legislative hall, regardless of unpopularity and political stripes from monopolistic demagogues, stand for the interests of the masses of your constituents, do not betray your trust, remember your oath of office, "Show thyself a man." Custodian of justice, empowered to give legal advice in all matters of litigation, when property, liberty, and life are in the balance, regardless of the applause of an uninformed public or the hisses of an inflamed mob, be true to your client and the best interests of society, "Show thyself a man." Guardian of health, called to minister in the sick room, diagnose the case with care, be true to the patient and to the God of life, though another may stoop to the deeds of a

quack, "Show thyself a man." Called of God to minister in holy things, cultivate the gift of prayer, develop the art of public speaking, familiarize yourself with the Living Word, attain efficiency in all possible ways, but above all, "Show thyself a man." It is said of Enoch before his translation that "he pleased God." Oh, my brother, let it be the highest ambition of your life to please Him whose approbation surpasses the applause of multitudes, and know this, that to please Him you must "Show thyself a man."

Christian Poise—what is it? Look upon the "Man Christ Jesus." He who never in all His earthly life exhibited undue haste, yet had a definite purpose toward which He constantly labored, never faltering, never evading duty, never dividing His energies, conscious that His mission was to "seek and to save that which was lost," He walked without halting to the Cross. What perfect composure when enemies criticized! What balance of judgment at all times exhibited! Reviled, yet He reviled not again, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion, pure as a child, tender as a woman, and as strong as a man. Tempted in all points as we are and yet without sin. A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Commending righteous deeds, reproving sin, a Succor to the weak, and a Friend to all. Identifying Himself always with the needy, relieving distress, administering to the sick and bringing comfort to the house of mourning. In Him we have an Example that calls for our highest endeavor. May the Lord lead us through our imperfections "till

178 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,"—a man possessing Christian Poise, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

XII

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

"He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: as His Custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read."—Luke 4:16.

As we assemble for the first service in this tabernacle and stand upon the threshold of this campaign, we have a purpose as high as the noblest aspiration of man. Angels may be peeping over the battlements of glory and perhaps the cohorts of hell look in wonderment from their dens of infamy to ascertain the outcome of these services. The inhabitants of surrounding country and neighboring towns have heard the clarion call which brought us together and expectantly await information as to the results of this united effort. Never before have the citizens of this city faced opportunities which meant as much to their happiness and eternal salvation as those now confronting us. These opportunities are freighted with such possibilities as to make it imperative that we seriously consider the responsibility which they bring. Let us then study the coming of Jesus to Nazareth as He announces His Deity and mission; for He did not more truly come to Nazareth in person than He is coming in Spirit to this city in these days of evangelistic endeavor. Therefore, the most intelligent way to decide what to do with such opportunities is to determine what we will do with Jesus.

I. AN OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR.

What an opportunity the residents of Nazareth had to hear the divine message from the lips of the Divine Messenger! The coming of Jesus was unannounced and the audience He found was the regular Sabbath morning worshipers. Why were many, who could and should have been out to hear this, the only sermon Jesus ever delivered in His home town, not there? Was it because they did not know He was to preach? Was it because they were not interested in spiritual things? Were some not there because the old scribe had been a little too personal and mandatory in his teaching? Were some absent because they did not have a new Easter bonnet or a new dress for the baby? Why need I go further? You may as well know now as later that I am not here to reprove a people two thousand years dead. It is not the sins of the "Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girghashites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites," nor the Nazarethites, but it is the sins of Americanites that I am to expose. You have a generation of American heathen here who have not been in a church for so long that were they to go they would feel as strangely environed as a hobo in the dining-room of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. That is why we had to build this tabernacle, to help you form the habit of going to church.

Some of you were down here for choice seats twenty minutes before the hour of services who have not

heard your pastor preach six times in the past six months. You do not go to church because you take a Sunday paper, or go fishing, or run to the Sunday movie, or follow a Saturday night revelry with late sleep and drive out in your auto in the evening. You remain at home to entertain company. Take your company to church with you or let them sit on the door step until you return. When you remain at home for visitors you are losing better company than you get, I do not care who comes to see you. You cannot afford to crowd out God and stint your own soul by catering to Sunday festivities. Place God and the salvation of souls before any company. Some of you remain from church saying, "We hired the preacher to run the church." No you did not. If he were to attempt that by beginning on you, you would balk more stubbornly than a mule. Others of you do not go to church because your pastor is uncompromising in his denunciation of your personal sins. When he preaches against frenzied speculation, booze fighting, gossiping and social cards some of you sizzle like a piece of bacon on a hot griddle. Perhaps you were not asked to sing a solo, or the weather was too hot or too cold; somebody did not speak to you, or you had an imagined cold or the asthma, that is why you were not there. Did you ever notice how colds, and asthma, and Sunday headaches, and rheumatiz behave themselves when a social function is given or a public dinner served? Nine times out of ten your absence from church is because you are sensual and carnal

and blind to your soul's best interest. Do you hear that, you sleeping, backslidden church member?

Does someone say, "Mr. Newlin, you haven't hit the reason yet why I do not go to church. I do not become a Christian and attend services because of the many imperfections of the church." If that is your excuse you would do well to follow the example of Jesus. He worshipped in a church that was far from perfect. I do not know where you could find a perfect church and if you should find one it would be imperfect in five minutes, if you were to become a member. A man may always profit where the Word of God is read. As long as a church stands by the Bible she will be a help to any man, but when she gives up the Bible, all or any part of it, she might as well close her doors. If one ever had a sufficient reason to stay away from church because of her imperfections, Jesus certainly was that one. But He went to church, went regularly, went to worship, and a better habit no man ever formed. "As His custom was, He went into the synagogue." Jesus was not spasmodic in His church attendance. He did not begin going when He entered upon His public ministry. He first went when a baby in His mother's arms; at the age of twelve upon His own initiative He accompanied His parents to the Passover in Jerusalem, and He was regular in attendance at worship until He went back to Heaven.

When did you attend prayer meeting last? You ask, "Will one lose the opportunity of hearing anything worth while if he should miss prayer meeting? Thomas

certainly did. He did not go because he expected nothing out of the ordinary to happen. He thought Peter would lead the meeting and he was not an admirer of Peter's long prayers. Jesus was now dead, why should he go? There would be little of interest to him there. Poor Thomas! Peter did not lead the service as he supposed. Jesus was there with the Resurrection message. What an opportunity he missed! Thomas was present the next prayer meeting night and I am entertaining the hope that as much may hereafter be said of you. There were those in Macedonia who failed to attend an open air service, a typical twentieth century prayer meeting, not a man present, only women in attendance. One afternoon some excused themselves from going because there were indications of rain, or they had a little headache and thought the meeting would not amount to much. But Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, appeared and delivered the first sermon ever heard in Macedonia. How I should like to have been there! A revival broke out in which Lydia and her entire household were converted.

Yes, Thomas and the inhabitants of Macedonia and the people of Nazareth all lost great opportunities to hear. They would have been present had they known something out of the ordinary was to happen. Certainly! There are always those who miss everything else and take in all the specials. I suppose I have some of them here this morning who always hear every new preacher whether their pastor has a hearing or not. You home-staying, ear-itching, cold-hearted, back-

slidden specialite, you always miss something good when you remain from any service in the church where you belong and ought to be. God bless the regulars, a half dozen of them cause the devil more concern than a whole tribe of these religious gadders. I am preaching to people this morning who have lost the opportunity of hearing some of the greatest sermons the past twelve months, delivered from the pulpits of this city by the pastors on this platform, that were ever preached in a city of this size in the state. You haven't a minister here but would, if given a full house of earnest hearers at every service, preach with such animation as to interest Gabriel and the angelic host of heaven. I pray that the Spirit of God may awaken the people of this city, and that in addition to the saving of souls, we may have a great and permanent revival of church going.

II. AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE.

Let us see in the second place, how those who did hear the Master's great Nazareth sermon lost the opportunity of receiving the attendant blessing by not accepting it as from God. What happened in the synagogue that morning which those Nazareth home-stayers missed? There was given to Jesus the book of Isaiah's prophecy, "And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it is written." I do not know what you think of the method of which some boast; that of placing the Bible on the desk and preaching from any text which their eyes happen to

fall upon where the Book chances to open. I have never adopted that method, nor did Jesus. He opened the Book and "*found the place.*" He knew what text would be appropriate for the occasion and where to find it; He knew what to preach and how to do it. He always spoke as one who had something to say rather than as one who had to say something. The latter is a blank cartridge and the former a loaded shell of large caliber. When He fired He hit the mark. By the help of God, brethren, while here, I purpose not to shoot wild of fire any empty cartridges.

Listen! Here is His text, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." By comparing Isaiah 61:1,2 with these words in Luke, you will find that He omitted one clause from the text in Isaiah. He began His sermon by saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." The clause omitted reads, "To proclaim the day of vengeance of our God." He is coming again some day and when He does that will be His text. He knew what part of the verse referred to His first advent and what belonged to the second, and in announcing His text He was clear on that point.

"The eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him." Nobody asleep in church that morning. The minister who can grip his audi-

ence with the first sentence and ever afterward hold their attention has acquired a great art. Jesus was able to do that. "All bear Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." What eloquence! What earnestness! What a personal, soul-stirring message that was! What other message did He ever deliver that, from a human standpoint, so affected Him as this one? He is in the town of His boyhood and His audience is composed of His most intimate acquaintances. Those with whom he grew to manhood are before Him. What emotions must have welled up in Him while telling them His mission in the world! They "Wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." They were certainly great hearers. But remember the Scripture says "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." You would have thought the way they leaned forward to catch those "gracious words" that they would certainly appropriate His teaching and receive the blessing from God. No, not that audience. Before He pronounced the benediction, while He was yet speaking those "gracious words," they stumbled at His Deity and began to whisper to one another, "Is not this *Joseph's* son?" They were just like a lot of twentieth century sinners, they were more concerned about the *Messenger* than the *Message*.

When Peter, the great preacher of Pentecost, was in prison, a service was announced to be held in Mary's home. Those who were converted to Peter

rather than to Christianity stayed away thinking that Andrew would consider himself appointed as spokesman in his brother's absence. Their interest was in the messenger rather than the message. If you have pinned your religion to any other than Jesus you have none worth the naming for the devil got the whole of it in less than twenty-four hours. But Peter *was* there. They prayed for his deliverance and God sent the answer to their prayer in a pair of sandals. The answer came before they had finished asking. What a prayer meeting, and some missed it just as you have been missing the special seasons for prayer the past few weeks. I believe in prayer meetings in the home; they are Scriptural and encourage the taking of our religion home with us. Too many of us leave what little religion we have down at the church. Christianity is a splendid thing to have around the house. One of the things I hope to see accomplished in this campaign is the establishing of family altars and popularizing prayer services in the home. Think what that meeting must have meant to young John Mark, a son of the home, when Peter came walking in, the answer to their prayer. I do not know of a warmer place for a young man than in the corner of his own home where prevailing prayer is offered. But think what those missed who deliberately stayed away thinking they would not hear the messenger of their liking.

Which do you talk about at the Sunday dinner table, the message or the messenger? Many children seldom hear a sermon, but they hear one rehashed or

rather hear their parents discussing the minister. Some of them will be eternally doomed because of the unfavorable comment they hear of the pastor. The "gracious" words are forgotten and the conversation centers in "Joseph's son." What will be the subject of your conversation at the dinner hour to-day? I guess you have already thought of several things you intend to say about the evangelist. "He is a little younger looking than I thought he would be." "I wonder if he is married." "How do you like his delivery?" Never mind the delivery, if you put in your appearance you will get what is coming to you. I hope the message will so grip you that you will entirely forget the messenger. It is the quality of the steak that determines its wholesomeness and not the color of the delivery wagon or the fact the driver wore a red tie. When fire breaks out in your home at midnight it is the quick response of the fire department that saves your home, and not whether it was a woman or a man, a university graduate or an imbecile, a millionaire or a hobo who turned in the alarm.

A messenger rings your door bell and hands you a little yellow envelope which you open and read the message, "Mother is dying, come." You do not talk about the age of the messenger, how he dressed or how he acted. It is the message that sends the dagger to your heart and starts you across three States in the race with death. Jesus went to His home town, Nazareth, as the "Messenger Boy" with God's telegram inviting them to the Marriage of the Lamb. They "won-

dered at the gracious words" as He read that message, but instead of receiving it with the joy of true believers they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" I shall sincerely endeavor in this campaign to deliver the true message fearlessly, uncompromisingly, lovingly, and in the power of the Spirit. May the God of heaven stir your hearts and help you to get your eyes off the messenger and fix your hearts upon the message of eternal life.

III. AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE.

Nazareth's opportunity to hear and to receive was only surpassed by her incomparable opportunity to serve. Jesus is never left without a few who are ready to hear and willing to receive, but we would often let Him trod the winepress alone. He reproved those who would not enlist in service with Him, saying, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself; whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. No prophet is accepted in his own country." He then used the following illustrations, saying in effect: "Many widows were in *Israel* in the days of Elijah, the prophet, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of the widows in *Israel* did God send His prophet. Through sin and unbelief there was not one widow in all *Israel* to whom His prophet could be sent. So he was sent beyond *Israel*, even unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman who was a widow, and there,

out in the heathen world, God's prophet was entertained. There was not a widow in all *Israel* whose barrel of meal wasted not and whose cruse of oil did not fail in the time of prolonged famine; not a widow in *Israel* whose son was brought again to life, not one save the widow of Sarepta, who heard, received and served the prophet of God.

Just as the skilled woodsman strikes his axe twice in the same place to split the knotty, cohesive stick, so Jesus in His second illustration struck just where He had before, saying: "There were many lepers in *Israel* in the time of Elisha the prophet, but not one leper in all *Israel* was cleansed. The only leper restored was Naaman, the Syrian, from far away Damascus, beyond the borders of the children of the Covenant. And now must the anointed Son of God turn from His home and kindred and the chosen seed of Abraham because of the blindness of your eyes and the stubbornness of your wills? Must I, through your rigid unbelief and hardness of heart, turn also to the Gentile world as did Elijah and Elisha?" He gave them a close fitting shoe and it pinched their corns. What was the effect of these illustrations? We are not left to guess. "When they heard *these things*"—the two illustrations and they certainly heard, nobody in the audience was asleep—"All in the synagogue, when they heard these things were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon the city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong."

Jesus often spoke "gracious words" at which His hearers marveled, but when it became necessary to reprove sin with sharp, cutting accusations He did so in no pussy-footed manner. It is a great art to know how to season the message with the right mixture of grace and grit, of love and law.

A lost opportunity to serve. Not one man in all Nazareth rose up to stay the mob. They seemed to think, as some do now, that to expel the messenger is to expunge the truth of the message. It no more makes your sin a virtue to hump up your back like a camel and belittle the church than to break the mirror would remove freckles from your nose; neither does it change your course from hell to heaven to throw the Bible into the fire and denounce the preacher for telling you the truth. The only thing that will save you from eternal woe is to repent of your sin and with Paul become "a servant of Jesus Christ." Herod and Pilate, Cæsar and Agrippa, Felix and Festus all heard and trembled with feeling. They had their opportunity, but serve Christ they would not. Their opportunity like all lost opportunities was irretrievable and they are banished from God as a consequence. Nazareth had its hearers and Jerusalem its believers, but Jesus went alone to the brow of Nazareth's hill, to the courtroom in Jerusalem and to Calvary's summit. At least some in Nazareth heard and there must have been a few who received the Messenger as from God, but there were none to serve. A lost opportunity. Never again could they keep step with Him in the

streets of Nazareth and join with Him in the efficacious work of lifting a lost world from the depths of sin back into favor with God. Who knows when he is having his last opportunity to hear, his last opportunity to receive, and his last opportunity to serve? This evangelistic campaign will be the last opportunity some of you will ever have to win a soul to Jesus. Will you lose that opportunity or will you, in the power of the Spirit, go forth to the work as a faithful servant?

It is one of God's laws of economy to take away that which is unused. The unexercised arm will lose its cunning. The inactive mind will lose its store of knowledge. The unemployed talent is taken from the slothful servant and given to him who occupies. "Thou mayest be no longer steward," is God's pronouncement upon many who have lost opportunities to serve. Poor Nazareth-like Christian, your opportunity is gone and gone forever if you allow the Savior to pass without joining in service with Him. He never went back to Nazareth to find pillars upon which to build His church. Had some man risen up that morning in Nazareth and said, "If you cast Jesus over that precipice you will have to cast me over it also, for with Him I live, with Him I serve, and if need be with Him I die," he would have been held up by every preacher the past two thousand years as the most worthy example of Christian courage and loyal service. Opportunity knocks at least once at every man's door and at the door of every city, but it never kicks in

the panels. You let these services come and go and do nothing—do anything short of your best to win your friends to Christ, and you will have lost, if not your last opportunity to win them, certainly a better one than you will ever again have. May the Lord help you to realize this. The people of this city are at this hour face to face with an unexcelled opportunity for Christian service. I ask, what will you do with this opportunity? May the Lord open our eyes and ears and hearts to see and hear and receive just such a blessing as He knows this city needs, and may Jesus be able to count on us for service too, for we cannot have a revival until we are willing to work.

XIII

THE WINNING CHURCH

*"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. * * * And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."*—Acts 2:42, 47.

There are three things said to have been daily occurrences in the early church; a daily searching of the Scriptures, a daily multiplying of believers, and a daily adding to the church. When the Spirit of Pentecost was at high tide three thousand were saved in one day and the months had not lengthened into a year before the church had nearly fifty thousand members. "They continued steadfastly." The steadfastness of the early church was made possible by all the membership being "with one accord." There is a vast difference between being steadfast with God and being stuckfast for the devil. God cannot bless a church when its members are carried away by every novelty and are as variable as a weathervane. This church was and every other winning church is steadfast.

I. STEADFAST IN DOCTRINE.

"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." They did not belong to that class of fickle religionists who have mutilated the Bible until it resembles an agent's prospectus. Whenever the church gives up the plain, fixed truths of the Bible she might as well quit. The man with no hook on his line might

as well leave the stream. He cannot even catch a mud turtle without a hook. If we have outgrown the Gospel we have lost our hook and will fail as "fishers of men." I brand the liberal-thought propaganda as a subtle agency of the devil and nail my faith to the Cross and stick by the old Book. Never was there a time when more false doctrines were being taught than now. There are the Eddyites, the Russellites, the Mormonites and all the rest of the parasites. I never waste much time exposing Christian Science for I once saw a football player sprain his ankle by kicking at nothing and have ever since been rather cautious.

This running after every religious fanatic who starts some doctrine of the devil reminds me of the old Arkansas farmer who, when asked what was the matter with his hogs, they were so poor, replied, "When I lost my voice a year ago I could not call them to their feed, so I got a big stick and hammered on the crib and they soon learned that was a call to their corn. They were doing well until three weeks ago when some woodpeckers came in here and went to pounding on the old dead trees. My hogs ran in the direction of the noise, thinking it was my call to their feed. When they came running and squealing the frightened woodpeckers would fly to another dead tree and the hogs would run to that part of the woods. They have just about run my hogs to death." I hope the church will cease running after these religious woodpeckers. Much so-called "new thought" is old nonsense.

A steadfast church is one whose members realize they have something with which to save men. You can preach ethics and reform and liberal thoughtism with the persistence of a Mormon elder, but sinners will continue to go in the way of Cain and run greedily after the error of Balaam. An old speckled hen will hatch no chickens from china eggs even though she keeps watch over the nest for six weeks. The man who tries to save sinners with anything less than Jesus Christ and Him crucified has gone into the china egg business. He might as well go on an elephant hunt in Africa with nothing but a popgun that shoots only paper wads as to preach a Christless message to twentieth century sinners. The Gospel of the atoning blood of Jesus is the buckshot which pierces the heart of sinners and leads them to repentance. "The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation" and there is no substitute.

We hear much these days about the something to which men are saved: to a life of respectability, to home, to Heaven; but we hear very little about that from which men must be saved. A family in New Jersey was at the breakfast table when they discovered that their house was on fire. The wife cried, "Oh, there is the old bureau with so many heirlooms, we must get it out if we lose everything else." The father and son rushed for it, the father getting in front and the son behind. They pulled and pushed as it became wedged in the front door until they could get it neither out nor in. The son was blocked in

the house with no chance to escape. The father ran to a window, at the side of the house, over which were several iron bars. Seeing his son in the furnace prison, he seized those bars and jerked them off, bringing forth his son to safety.

A minister decided he would use this story at the close of his sermon to clinch his message. He gave a graphic description of the exciting scene, and told how the father made a battering ram of himself until his arteries stood out like whipcords, as he moved the bars from their fastenings with the strength of a Hercules. At the close of the illustration the audience was inclined to smile and there was an unsuccessful attempt on the part of many to look wise. On the way home from the service the minister said, "Wife, why was it that story did not take?" She complimented him on the selection of the illustration and upon the vivid way in which he told the story, and then said, "But you made one fatal mistake; you forgot to tell the audience that the house was on fire." There are too many ministers who neglect to tell the people of the fires of hell.

Too often the church is talking about science, and learning, and wireless telegraphy, and the uses of radium and liquefied air—and it amounts to just about so much hot air. These things will never hasten the Millennium. Remember Jesus gave the sinning world in His message not science except the science of salvation, not philosophy except the philosophy of faith, not poetry except the poetry of pardon. The church

to-day is painfully respectable, she dresses in silk and broadcloth and lifts both hands in horror if anything is not done precisely in the line of ecclesiastical etiquette. She talks about quietness and the absence of sensationalism, forgetting that she was the child of a storm, born amid thunderings and tongues of fire. May the dull ear of the church hear and understand that, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," is she to do the work of her Risen Founder.

II. STEADFAST IN FELLOWSHIP.

"They continued steadfastly in fellowship." Pentecost came to a church with a small membership. The Bible record is, "The number of names together were about an hundred and twenty." In that day every Christian was a church member and every church member was a Christian. I meet some professed Christians who boast of being members of no church. They ask, "Cannot one go quietly to Heaven and be a Nicodemus or a Joseph of Aramathea?" I presume you might be a Christian without being a church member; I know you can be a church member without being a Christian just as one can be an American citizen without having a home. You perhaps have recently had one of these citizens at your back door. But neither this hobo-citizenship nor tramp religion has ever appealed to me. You have no business in the church if you are not a Christian and no business out of the church if you are a Christian.

There are three types of railroad engines which illustrate three classes of men. There is the dead engine, the leaking flues have smothered the fire until there is neither steam nor life. They couple it in the middle of a train and draw it to the nearest repair shop. This engine is a dead load, neither pulling nor carrying a pound, and fittingly illustrates the lifeless church member. Some churches are so burdened with these dead weights that they can carry very little of the Water of Life to the thirsty thousands. I want this campaign to be to them what the repair shop is to the dead engine, that they may come forth pulsating with power. There is the wild engine which, by some unknown cause, has an open throttle, and without engineer plunges down the main line, making its own schedule, menacing the traveling public, until its power is spent. This engine illustrates the non-church, free-lance, religious fanatic. The third engine is a thing of power drawing its full tonnage at the will of the engineer who moves in accord with the dispatcher's schedule. This engine is a type of the consecrated Christian, hitched up to the big problems of the world's redemption, moving in harmony with the schedule of the church of which he is a part.

A few years ago there were nine hundred fifty-seven derelicts adrift on the sea. A derelict is a vessel commanded by no captain, controlled by no crew, sailing for no port, carrying no cargo; a menace to all navigation on the highway of the seas. The United States Congress authorized the construction of a vessel whose

crew was commissioned to destroy all derelicts. If a man had attempted to put down the Civil War independent of the United States Army, by going out as a bushwhacker, he would have been whacking yet, and never would have been on the pension pay roll. If this world is ever won to the Lord it will be accomplished through the organized church.

A church member who is not a Christian is worth absolutely nothing to the cause of Christ, and a Christian who will not become a member of some church is worth very little more. One of the first things to be accomplished in this meeting is to make the religious tramps feel their littleness. If I were to come to this city and organize into a church those who have moved here within the past twenty years and are still carrying their church letters, I would have a larger membership than any pastor in the city, but it would be composed of a stale crowd. I have heard of butter and eggs after being kept in cold storage for eight years, palmed off on an innocent public as fresh produce. Here is something that surpasses that: I was asked to preach the funeral sermon of a lady several years ago, who had been the wife of an editor of a church paper, the official organ of a leading denomination. She was a stranger to me and when I asked for some evidence of her Christian life there was handed me a piece of paper musty with age. I opened its torn folds with care and found it to be a church letter, written before Fort Sumter was fired upon. Think of it, her religion tied up in a napkin for forty-

five years! There are some pigeon-hole, cold-storage, trunk religionists in this city within ten months of the judgment who will leave the minister nothing more tangible over which to wax eloquent in preaching their funeral sermon than a musty old church letter. I pray that this campaign may help you get your religion out of your trunk and get it into your heart, then you will join the church and be worth something to the cause of Christ. You will never whip the devil with your church letter, tramp religion.

III. STEADFAST IN BREAKING BREAD.

"They continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread." This doubtless refers to the Lord's Supper which kept before their minds the Cross of Calvary and was the cement which bound their hearts together in Christian unity. "They were all with one accord in one place." For soul-winning in the twentieth century we need "one accord" more than we need imposing church houses; we need "one accord" more than we need pipe organs; we need "one accord" more than we need opera singers in the choir; we need "one accord" more than we need rich men on the membership roll; we need "one accord" more than we need culture in the pew; we need "one accord" more than we need scientific hair-splitting in the pulpit. A father and his son were witnessing a tug-of-war between two groups of college students. A large rope with a ribbon tied about the center of it was placed across a canal, and an equal number of boys on each

side were trying to pull their opponents into the water. "What are they trying to do, Papa?" asked the lad. The father replied, "They are trying to pull the ribbon on the rope across the canal." The little fellow intelligently added, "Why don't they all pull from one side, Papa? It would be easy then." The winning church is that one in which all members pull from one side. How can there be a revival when there are divisions in the church? The sacred dove takes its flight when contention and discord enter.

What could General Pershing do in the present gigantic struggle if a colonel refused to put his regiment in the front line trenches and a captain insisted that his battalion must have a furlough just when an offensive is being launched, and a lieutenant encouraged mutiny among his company because they were not assigned a sector to their liking? The gratifying achievement of the American Army in putting the Huns to rout, was only possible because from major general to private there has been absolute allegiance and implicit obedience to General Pershing's command. How can you expect your pastor to win in the fight against sin when he cannot command one soldier in ten, or one dollar in a thousand? When he preaches against modern sins and hits home, **one-fifth** of the army become indignant and insubordinate. If every enlisted man and woman who has the society itch and other worldly ailments, had to go into a detention camp or hospital, some pastors would not have enough able-bodied soldiers for picket duty. That

man who professes to be a follower of Jesus and objects to a campaign against sin like this is an alien enemy to the cause of Christ and should be regarded as a subtle foe. You would be exceedingly sorry for a frail widow who had five pairs of twins, all imbeciles yet in the nursery. There are pastors as much to be pitied, who have sixteen or twenty babies ranging from seventeen to seventy years of age, still in the cradle and they outcry a weaning child if they are not given soothing syrup or some form of an appeaser. The entire church is so much occupied caring for these spoiled babies in some cases, that there is little time left to win new recruits for the Master.

When I see the discord which exists in some churches I am reminded of an experience of my boyhood. I went to visit an uncle who lived in a small town. He had a general store and his family occupied rooms above. At my request he set going the dozen or more clocks on the shelves and when night came a bed was fixed for me in the rear end of the store. You can imagine what a night I had. No two of those clocks had the same time. Every few minutes one of them would strike; now a coarse bell slowly sounded out the hour of eight, then a little fine bell quickly affirmed that it was midnight, and presently a cuckoo called off the hour of three. For the life of me, with all of those clocks, I could not tell when morning would come, I did not know which one of them to believe. I could hear the old regulator on the wall counting out the seconds, but the room was dark and I could not see

the time it indicated. I was glad when morning finally came. There is a great deal of ding-dinging and dong-donging and cuckooing over non-essentials which will have to be adjusted to the old Regulator, the Word of God, before we become efficient soul winners.

It frequently occurs when a campaign is launched for the saving of souls that there are those, having never learned to tithe their income, who lift a protest against the meeting because of what it will cost. This early church knew how to give. Either their generosity made Pentecost possible or Pentecost produced their generosity; I am not certain which was the cause and which the effect. I have observed that the spiritual church is usually a liberal church and when a church becomes generous a baptism of grace follows. We are sadly in need of a revival of generosity. Some churches resort to tricks that would shame the devil to get a little money to pay running expenses. The more oyster soup it takes to keep a church running the faster it is going to the devil. The Lord will never bless a synagogue of misers. I am not now speaking against church suppers if they are not commercialized; the fact is some churches have something yet to learn at this point. There are some churches which have doctrine and prayer and leave fellowship and eating for the world to monopolize. If you have fellowship and eating only, you are drifting from God, and if you have doctrine and prayer only, you are letting the other fellow drift from God. The winning church combines the four.

IV. STEADFAST IN PRAYER.

"They continued steadfastly in prayer." Mark that! The church on its knees will bring Pentecost, and Pentecost will keep the church on its knees. If you would see a genuine revival in this city there must be effectual, fervent prayer. This is a time when we must fast and pray rather than feast and play. A man wrote out a little prayer and hung it on the wall of his room and each night he would point toward that prayer and say, "Well, God, those are my sentiments," and jump into bed. That is no more praying than slipping your calling card under the door is communing with a friend. The church needs to go down upon her knees. We have in the membership of the church more who attend the theater than go to prayer meeting, more who play cards than have family worship, more who desecrate the Lord's Day than will pray in public, more who pay less than one dollar a year to the church than those who tithe their income, more who live on the "no harm level" than earnestly seek to do the will of God. What wonder there has been no great revival for years. Prayer is the right arm of evangelism and personal work is the left, and a revival never comes to a one-armed church.

The winning church is one whose members realize their individual responsibility to the sinner and labor for his conversion. Peter was not the only human agent that the Lord used at Pentecost; there were one hundred and nineteen others. They were men and

women of great faith, full of the Holy Ghost and with a passion for lost souls. They fasted and prayed and worked with the individual until three thousand were saved. The church must pray and do personal work or shut up shop. One Bible sermon with one hundred nineteen earnest personal workers led three thousand to Jesus. Now it takes about three hundred sermons to convert one sinner. It is not organization we need so much as individual effort. Organization is good, but some churches have so much organization you can stand a mile away and hear the grinding of the machinery. With all of their machinery there are people who have lived for twenty years under their shadow without once being asked to become Christians. Let us make bare our arms for the saving of souls. Sleepy saints will never overtake wide-awake sinners.

A minister who had been for sixteen years the pastor of a wealthy church in Detroit called the officers of his church to his home and expressed his dissatisfaction at what their great church was doing in the way of saving the lost. At the close of his heart-searching plea, they knelt with him and prayed that at all costs their church might be used to give the bread of life to the unsaved multitudes of the city. While that prayer was being breathed out to God, their magnificent church building was in flames and the next morning was a total ruin. An opera house was rented and opened for evangelistic services and in the next sixteen months more souls were saved than had been in all the previous sixteen years' effort of that church. This

proved to be an answer to their prayer. God is certainly not displeased with our magnificent church buildings, but He must sometimes adopt strenuous measures to arouse a prayerless church.

Another pastor, having asked the officers of his church to remain at the close of a Sunday evening service said, "Brethren, I must make known to you what is upon my heart. We have gone one whole year without a single conversion and I feel that my usefulness has come to an end and that I ought to resign." They protested against his contemplated action, assuring him they were well pleased with his work. "But," said he, "we are saving no souls." Turning to one of the men he asked, "How long have you been a Christian?" "Twenty-eight years," was the reply. "How long have you been an official of this church?" "Seventeen years, pastor." "Do you believe that by your personal efforts a soul was ever saved?" "I do not know of one," was his reply. After talking with each of the men and receiving similar replies he said, "Now, brethren, unless we can bring at least one soul to Jesus within the next two weeks, I shall resign, and I think you men should all do likewise. We ought not to occupy the high offices we do unless we are soul winners." At the suggestion of one of the men they knelt in prayer together before separating.

The following morning one of the men went into his large department store and after calling the head clerk into his office said, "George, you have been with me

fourteen years and are the best man I ever had. I want to confess that I have not done my duty by you. I have known that you were not a Christian, but I have never recommended my Savior to you. I have been alike unfaithful to Him and uninterested in you. If I may have your forgiveness I want in your presence to seek His." After a further conversation the two men knelt together in prayer. They arose from that prayer, one having become a Christian and the other a soul winner. As they brushed the tears from their eyes the proprietor said, "Now, George, I want you to help me lead the other men of the store to Jesus." They went to work and before night eleven men in that one store were saved. The next Sunday morning thirty-one men came into the church with new hope and presented themselves for church membership. That is the kind of a revival I want to see in this city, and it would be on in twenty-four hours if every Christian would get busy for God. John Knox cried, "Give me Scotland or I die," and the Lord gave him Scotland and threw in England for good measure. If you cannot sweat blood as did the Master, you can shed tears over sinners. May the Lord bring the church to her knees for unsaved souls. A tear-stained face is the one argument the devil cannot meet. If every Christian will go out as a firebrand for God scores will be converted every day of this campaign.

XIV

SAFEGUARDS OF SOCIETY

“When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.”—Deut. 22:8.

God is interested not only in man's spiritual well-being but also in his temporal good. The underlying principle of all equitable law is God-given, and may be found in the writings of Moses and the prophets. The Ten Commandments contain the basic elements of man's duties and in the book of Deuteronomy there is an amplification of the Decalogue. Many of these laws have to do with our daily conduct and are designed for our safety and that of the general public. We have heard much of “Safety First” the past decade, but that was God's slogan forty centuries ago. The stipulation in the text may be called a building law, differing little from modern enactments requiring brick walls, marked exits, fire-escapes and other precautions against fire and loss of life. It was the custom in those days to erect houses with flat roofs, much after the fashion of our business blocks. In that warm climate the roof was an important room, where the family gathered after sunset. Hence the danger of falling therefrom unless protected by a battlement or railing. To prevent the loss of life and assure domestic safety, the law was given that when

such a house was erected, the builder should make a battlement to serve as a safeguard. I wish to make three applications of the principles of that law as it affects society at present.

I. BATTLEMENTS ABOUT THE CHURCH.

First, let us read the text, "When thou buildest a new church, then thou shalt make a battlement about that institution, that it may not be charged to the carelessness of the church, if any fall from thence." Such an interpretation is in keeping with the purpose of the command, for in the days of Moses the house top was the sanctuary. One purpose then in requiring battlements about the roof was to give protection while at worship. In my early ministry, as a general missionary, I was instrumental in organizing not a few churches and have been called upon to officiate at church dedications in six states. A building so dedicated is indeed a sacred place and should be entered with becoming reverence. It should ever remain a "house of prayer," and never be converted into a "market place." How shall we make the battlements about the church sufficient to hold the young and lead the unsaved to Christ?

The mid-week prayer service is a most effective means of placing safeguards about the church. No substitute can measure up to the old-fashioned prayer-meeting, where the children of God supplicate the throne of grace in effectual, fervent prayer. If the prayer-meeting is the spiritual thermometer of the

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church there are some churches cold enough to give an Eskimo the gripe. The prayerless church has lost her battlements and can neither save nor hold the young people of her families. A faithful presentation of the Gospel has been a fruitful source of winning sinners and edifying saints. Where prevailing prayer is offered and a high standard of pure Bible truth is taught the battlements are up. "Thus saith the Lord" is a safeguard over which few will ever fall. There are a thousand enticing things in the world to-day to draw men from the house of worship. The most effective and permanent attraction to lead them to church is righteous living on the part of all professed followers of Jesus and a faithful declaration of "the whole counsel of God." Men are hungry for a positive Gospel, the Gospel of salvation from sin.

There are many organizations in the church which have proven their worth, but mere machinery will not save and hold men. An abandoned church was sold to a company that converted it into an ice-house and the local paper commenting upon the matter said but few changes were necessary as the building was well adapted to its new use. It takes something more than organization to convert a refrigerator into an incubator. Factions and divisions must give place to unity of the spirit and warm-hearted Christian fellowship. There must be a feeding of the soul upon the "Bread from heaven." Many remove the battlements from the church by remaining from her services. If the angels look into the well-nigh deserted churches in the

hot summer months, they perhaps see robes lying about marked, "Mr. Autojaunt's Religion—left until called for," or "Mrs. Lakeite's Church Duties—to be claimed in the fall." Meanwhile, Mr. Autojaunt and Mrs. Lakeite defiantly throw their dust on Sunday until it rises like a cloud about the little church in the valley by the wildwood, where they ought to worship and do not. More of the decadence of church going is due to the godless example of tourists than we think. However exemplary may be your manner of life while on vacation, if you do not seek out some church and join in its worship, you multiply the burdens of that humble pastor and by your influence tear away the battlements from about the house of God. Every Christian is a guardian of souls, but some of us become so engrossed in business and pleasure that we must shamefully acknowledge with one of old, "As thy servant was busy here and there he was gone."

There is a striking lesson for the non-church goers in Second Chronicles where we read, "Jotham did ✓ that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord. And the people did yet corruptly." His father, King Uzziah, assuming the role of the high priest defiantly entered the holy of holies and for his irreverence was stricken with leprosy before the altar. The shock of that judgment may have led Jotham to say: "My father's life was ruined in the temple and I am going to keep out of it altogether." He harbored a grievance which had

no just foundation whatsoever, like many since have done, and felt perhaps that he could do his duty quite as well without any such ritual as the temple service supplied. Here then was a good man, upright in all his dealings, who never entered God's house to mingle his prayers and songs with God's people. And what was the result? "The people did yet corruptly." King Jotham's example was ruinous to the morals of the nation. The wider issues of his spiritual apathy became moral degradation. He was not a bad man, remember that. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." He even "built the high gate of the house of the Lord," but enter that holy temple for worship he would not. How like this man are many to-day; men of upright lives, who even support the church with generous contributions, but refuse to join in her devotions. Jotham's example became contagious and the whole nation suffered through his influence. He left the battlements down and the people of his kingdom fell from the roof of temple worship into the valley of moral corruption.

The extensive program of the church in recent years has challenged the hearty support of influential men in a way hitherto unknown. The generous response to this challenge is enabling her to wage a decisive offensive against varied and acute competition before which, twenty years ago, she would have retreated. We are now in the greatest transitional period of history. The certainty of new and vast problems for the church, growing out of the world war, is only

surpassed by the uncertainty of their scope and nature. No small part of our first year's war program was the necessary readjustment of the army organization, the transportational system, and the methods of business. Need it be thought strange if the church must undergo a similar readjustment if she is to perform her augmented task? Let us have no misgivings as to her ability to cope with the grave situation, having an all-sufficient Gospel and an omnipotent Lord. It is rather for us to now resolve that the church shall hold first place among the contributors to democracy's supremacy over autocracy; resolve that she shall double her diligence in her ministry of mercy to the suffering and sorrowing from wounds of war; resolve that she shall be the most efficient of all institutions when the new order of things is ushered in.

II. BATTLEMENTS ABOUT THE SCHOOL.

Second, let us read the text, "When thou buildest a new school, then thou shalt make a battlement about that institution, that it may not be charged to the carelessness of the state, if any fall from thence." Such an interpretation is justifiable when we remember that at the time this law was given the house top was the grammar school, the college, and the university. The centralized graded school with modern equipment and efficient instructors afford exceptional opportunity for the young to secure a thorough education. But there are causes for alarm. In many communities the Bible has been eliminated from the

schools and the degrading dance substituted. Nor is that all. Compare the present text-book with that of a generation ago. Then the great fundamental truths, such as the sovereignty of God and the authority of His law, were frequent lessons in the readers, but are seldom found in the otherwise improved text-book.

There is a truthful maxim, "What you would have in the nation you *must* put into the schools of the land." For what do we punish the youth of this country when they become of age? When was one ever fined, imprisoned, or put to death for mistakes in grammar, arithmetic, or geography? We punish not for poor reading, writing and spelling, but for theft, perjury, adultery and other moral wrongs. I question the right of the state to punish as wrong-doing what she never taught to be wrong. What right have we to punish immorality as a crime unless we teach in our schools God's standard of morality as a means of preventing crime? In this country which owes its civil liberty to Christ, must He and His Book dwell without the camp of our educational system? A Godless, Christless, and Bibleless school is certain to result in national godlessness, and national godlessness is anarchy. It is no compliment to a state that she bars the Bible from her schools, but requires it in her penitentiary. God save us from the day that any state would have her young commit a crime before she will read the Bible to him. Every cell in one of the large penitentiaries has a Bible, but a deck of cards cannot be found in the institution—the inmates would gamble

216 GREAT THINGS OF THE BIBLE

the buttons off their clothes. Yet many homes have substituted cards for the Bible. God pity the children of these homes.

In lifting safeguards about the schools we must not only see to it that the one chosen as instructor is competent to teach, but we must also be assured that her traits of character and habits of life are a worthy example for her pupils. She must interpret every lesson, and her construction of the morals taught cannot be higher than her own life. She receives the child when his whole life is plastic and his mind as sensitive as a photographic plate. The greatest danger, however, does not arise from the common schools, for in the main, the eighty thousand who each year cross the threshold for the first time as teachers possess the more abundant life. The real danger lies in the higher schools of learning where spiritual safeguards have become unpopular.

More of our young men and women should receive a college education, but if they must be so environed while receiving that education as to destroy their faith in the Bible, which is the foundation of indispensable knowledge, then they are losers an hundredfold in the end. In our institutions of higher learning an atmosphere has grown up which impugns, if it does not deny, the Bible, and is turning many of our colleges and universities into hotbeds of infidelity or refrigerators of indifference. They may have the Bible in the curriculum but only to be torn asunder as an unbelievable book. Many of them even teach that

marriage is not a divine institution but a mere human arrangement and that domestic morality is only a social convention. The chairs of science and philosophy in most of our state universities and in many other institutions are filled by professors whose minds are drenched with rationalism. I lift my protest to the prevailing custom which permits one to flaunt his liberal views, but prohibits the true believer from teaching the fundamentals of religion. If true religion is to be banished from our schools, in the name of reason, why drag it in and crucify it there? The school that does this inconsistent and criminal thing has torn away its battlements and subjects those who matriculate in it to the attendant evils of unbelief. We cannot exercise too much care in choosing the school in which to place our sons and daughters, and one of the important considerations is whether or not that school will safeguard their faith in God and the Bible.

Here let me make an appeal in behalf of the Christian college. These schools are supported by the free will contributions of a large constituency who pray that the Divine Teacher may so rule the school as to best develop those within its halls. The student is here surrounded by a wholesome atmosphere which leads many into the Christian life, and develops soul growth. At first the schools of the church were a chain of unendowed academies, each with a single plain building in which they did their most effective work in a very unpretentious way. Then came the

day of struggling colleges, with only the nestling of an endowment, but they did a work beyond adequate estimation. The past decade the endowment of our Christian colleges has grown like Jonah's gourd. We have all shared in making this growth possible and rejoice at its accomplishment. It enables these colleges to meet state requirements and inaugurate programs commensurate with the spirit of the times. I have sometimes thought that the weakness of the early church schools was their strength, and am certain that we need to pray much lest their present strength proves to be their weakness. The debt which the nation owes to the Christian college is greater than can be estimated. There were in the Colonies before our national independence, seven colleges, and these were pre-eminently Christian schools. It was from the halls of these institutions, where the higher principles of manhood were developed, that a large percentage of the men came who laid the foundation of our government and drafted the most equitable constitution among men. And from that day down to the present the Christian college stands as a lighthouse directing the sons of men into the safe channels of human events.

II. BATTLEMENTS ABOUT THE HOME.

In the third place, let us read the text, "When thou buildest a new home, then thou shalt make a battlement, or safeguard, about that home, to secure domestic peace and safety." We can scarcely conceive of a more important and eventful period in one's

life than when he assumes the responsibility of standing at the head of a new home. The Bible has much to say relative to the sacred vow and marriage altar. Man has also enacted laws governing marriage to safeguard the interests of the public and insure tranquillity to the family kingdom. When we come to speak of the home we are considering the oldest institution among men. It is the only institution that comes to us from the garden of Eden. It alone survived the Deluge. The family everywhere exists to-day in some form, and the Glory World is to be marshaled in by the marriage of the Lamb.

That there is need of frequent and judicious teaching the young the solemnity and sacredness of the marriage vow and the responsibilities which must be assumed when establishing a new home, there can be little question. Recent statistics reveal to us the alarming fact that one in every eight marriages is terminated by the untimely scourge of divorce. The woe that exists and the sorrows that are born in unhappy unions and ill-established homes where divorce has not yet been resorted to, only the thousands who thus suffer can know. I advocate a more stringent divorce law and certainly it should be uniform throughout all states. It frequently occurs that a ready-made divorce is secured by one member of the union upon the slightest pretense and when the peevish plight passes the couple confess their folly by remarrying. The most effective cure for the divorce evil is the anti-toxin of common sense and love to be administered

some months before marriage. Deference must always be shown to that one whom of all others it should be the greatest delight to please. No interest must be allowed to eclipse the interests of the home. There are many married people constantly in society airing their views who ought to be at home viewing their heirs. The attitude of some toward their homes reminds me of a certain domestic animal; to them home is little more than a place in which to eat and sleep and grunt.

There is no time more important to safeguard domestic happiness than when the home is being established. Hence, when thou buildest a new home, provide battlements. See to it that when children come into it, they may not meet with the awful fate described in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, when he said, "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter?" The laxity in the spiritual and moral tone of the home accounts for the alarming decadence of domestic discipline. There are too many parents who totally neglect the religious instruction of their children and are as ignorant of the Bible as the father who, when approached by his son, twelve years of age, with the question, "Father, who was Shylock?" met the question with the parental rejoinder, "Shame on you for such ignorance; hunt the Bible and find out for yourself."

Let the home be established in prayer, and protected by the family altar. Read the old Bible, and it will be as a battlement about the home. In these modern times of hustle we are getting away from the devout custom of our fathers in the regular observance of family prayers. If it was expedient to safeguard the home in the simple life of the primitive day, is it not imperative in the strenuous life of the present generation, when the home circle is constantly broken by the father being away on business, the son off to college, the mother out in society, and the daughter on vacation? This condition has given rise to the annual family reunion, at which time we have our pictures taken so we may see, the remaining three hundred sixty-four days of the year, how the family looks when all together. This meeting should be daily, and the place of the meeting about the family hearth-stone, and the object of the meeting to worship God. For, excuse ourselves as we will, the fact remains, when we shut God out of our homes, we close our hearts to heaven's richest blessings.

On the tenth of April in 1852, beneath the African sun, died an American. He was laid to rest in a lonely cemetery in Tunis, Africa. Thirty-one years later, as an act of a grateful public, the United States dispatched a man-of-war to the African coast, American hands opened that grave, placed the dust of his body on board the battleship, and turned again for his native land. Their arrival in the American harbor was welcomed by the firing of guns in the fort, and

by a display of flags at half-mast. His remains were carried to the nation's Capital City on a special train. There was a suspension of all business, an adjournment of all departments of government, and as the funeral procession passed down Pennsylvania Avenue, the president, vice-president, members of the cabinet, congressmen, judges of the supreme court, officers of the army and navy, and a mass of private citizens, rich and poor, stood with uncovered heads. To whom did they thus pay homage? To a man who expressed the longing of his heart rather than the happy experience of his life; a man whose soul longed for the domestic tranquillity of a pious home, such a home as our text makes provision for, and he expressed that longing in the words of that sweet song, "Home, Sweet Home."

Thus we see three co-ordinate purposes of this law: to safeguard Christian worship, place a battlement about intellectual research, and protect the domestic circle. And here we have the three most important institutions among men, the church, the school, the home. See that the child in his worship and church life is piously environed, and in his education develop the entire man, and give him a home atmosphere permeated with love and religion, and I will vouch for his citizenship. We are to-day very measurably the kind of men and women that the church life, school life, and home life made us. It could not well be otherwise. And the child in your arms to-day will become just such a citizen as the religious teaching

and church home you provide for him, the standard of the school in which he receives his education, and the moral and spiritual home in which he is reared, make him. May the home in which his spiritual self is born and nurtured in worship, the home in which his intellect awakens and is developed, and the home in which his physical form grows to full stature, all be surrounded by the battlements of prayer and faith in God. Such blessings universally given the individual are indeed Safeguards of Society.

XV

RELIGION IN THE HOME

"These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."—Deut. 6:6, 7.

These words teach most conclusively that it is the imperative duty of parents to instruct their children in religious things. This instruction is not to be given by proxy. The text does not read, "Thou shalt have them taught thy children by the Sunday School teacher." The Bible is in no wise opposed to such religious instruction, but these words are "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." Not only are they to be taught on Sunday morning or when there are religious friends in the home, but "thou shalt teach them *diligently* unto thy children." Neither does the text say, "Thou shalt talk of thy neighbor's shortcomings when thou sittest in thine house." This is a common subject of conversation in many homes. The admonition is "Thou shalt talk of them," the words of the Lord, "when thou sittest in thine house." Nor are we to talk simply of temporal things as we walk by the way, but use every bursting bud by day and every brilliant star by night in telling the story of the God of beauty, love and might. The text further says, "Thou shalt teach them

when thou liest down." This is an indorsement of the prevalent custom of teaching children to offer evening prayers. The last thought on the mind at night should be a thought of God. "And thou shalt teach them when thou risest up." The first thought on the mind in the morning should be a thought of God. Hence, the habit of observing the morning watch. We used to teach the catechism, but in many homes now there is not even taught a "kittychism."

I. CHRISTLESS HOMES.

A motherless or fatherless home is a pity, but a prayerless, Christless home is a tragedy. A home that is too poor to provide a bathroom in these days of modern conveniences has a penury which calls for sympathy, but a home that is too poor to own a family altar in these perilous days has a poverty which robs Heaven. The awfulness of the crime of a prayerless home is only equaled by the appalling number of such homes. I am not now talking about Bibleless homes. Very few people attempt to keep house without placing the Bible in the list of indispensable furnishings. Most every home in these days has a copy of the Bible, but it is frequently permitted to become dust-covered. The fact that a Bible might be found somewhere about the house does not disprove that the home is Christless. There are homes in which might be found the Bible, a deck of cards and a case of beer, none of which are in view to the casual observer. Through disuse the Bible may be covered with catalogues from mail-

order houses and a flood of other things which enter the daily life of the occupants, while the deck of cards and the case of beer may be hid from view to appease a guilty conscience in case a righteous neighbor should unexpectedly call. In most cases of this kind it would be an easier matter to find the deck of cards and the case of beer, however dexterously they may be hid, than to discover the disused Bible. Certain it is that one need not break through a barrier of cobwebs in locating these side dishes of the devil as frequently would be the case in finding the Book of Manna.

There are Christless homes in which the Bible is very much in evidence. In my early ministry I was calling in such a home and was invited to examine the Bible. The father of this home was a cabinetmaker and had prepared a nicely finished case of quarter-sawed oak in which to keep the newly purchased Bible. Before producing the Bible he searched through every pocket of his clothing and then turning to his wife asked, "Ida, didn't I give you that key?" A few minutes passed during which time a diligent search was made, resulting in the lost key being found. The key was inserted in the little lock which securely held the lid of the case and protected the Bible, as the father explained, from being handled and soiled by the children of the home. This was the first and only time I ever found the Bible under lock and key and the key lost. Some of you who smile at this are so irreligious that I could go to your homes and lock up the Bible and throw the key in the well and six

months would pass before you would miss the Book.

A recent editorial from *The Wall Street Journal* reads, "What America needs more than railway extension, and western irrigation, and a low tariff, and a bigger wheat crop, and a merchant marine, and a new navy, is a revival of piety, the kind mother and father used to have—piety that counted it good business to stop for daily family prayer before breakfast, right in the middle of harvest." That is not only fine sentiment and sane judgment, but it is also a timely exhortation coming from a rather unexpected source. How perilous the pathway that leads from the home too busy, too careless or too wicked to own a family altar. The family altar has altered many a family. Of all the criminals who fill our prisons and pollute the streams of social life, very few had homes in which God was honored and worshiped. A man who is so busy with his bank or business, so engrossed with his new car or old club that he cannot take time for family prayers, that man puts his children on the block and sells them to the devil for money and pleasure.

On a beautiful autumn day some years ago, in company with a brother, we drove into a barnyard in one of the fertile valleys of western Kansas and found a young man cribbing a load of newly-gathered corn. Our mission was to interest the people of the community in the services we were conducting in the near-by cross-roads church. After a brief conversation with this industrious young man, who manifested little interest in religious things, we turned and drove away.

Immediately in front of the house I asked the driver to stop the horse and look. "What do you see," said he, "of interest here?" I replied, "You have had no opportunity to explain, but I infer from the age of the young man with whom we have just been talking, and from the young orchard at the rear of the lot, the small barn, the new house, and other evidences that this is a newly-made home." "You are correct," said he, "but what will you have me see?" "Look," said I, "at this historic path on the opposite side of the road."

There, through a field of growing alfalfa, a little path led down into an orchard forty rods away above the trees of which the top of a chimney appeared. "Is not this the path," I asked, "which leads to mother's house? Is not the bride in the new home a daughter from the old home in the orchard?" "You are right, again," said he. Who can estimate the many useful articles, needed in a new home, that had come from that old home, up through the orchard, by the way of the little path, over the fence, across the road, into the new home? The flourishing rose bush at the corner of the new house was a transplanting from the family rose bush at the corner of the old home. The cluster of vines about the front porch sent a profuse fragrance from their gorgeous blossoms, just such vines as clambered about the old porch behind the orchard. The fruits and preserves which replenished the rather bare cupboard in the new home

came by this little pathway from the old home in the lane.

Happy is the young couple whose newly-made home sits at the end of such a path. They owe a debt of gratitude to the old home back of the orchard, the interest of which only can be paid by returned favors. With all the multiplied favors which may come from the old home into the new, the new home has not yet been established that will not sooner or later meet a crisis through which God alone is able to lead. At such a time a Christless, prayerless home is a barren desert to the weary pilgrims, but the family altar in the Christian home is a living fountain at which they drink and are refreshed. Build your new home, young people, not only at the end of a path which leads back to mother's house, but build it also at the foot of a ladder like unto the one that appeared to Jacob, the topmost rungs of which reach the throne of Heaven, the ladder of a family altar, upon which prayers ascend and the angels descend with Heaven's blessing.

II. CHRISTIAN HOMES.

A home where the dove of peace perches and the angel of love abides is a harbor in which storm-driven mariners on the domestic sea take mooring and find such happiness as a Christless world may give, but must feed their souls upon husks of temporal things instead of "The Finest of the Wheat." A home in which the spirit of true devotion hangs the lamp of hope in its lighthouse of faith is a haven in which

devout voyagers take refuge from the raging storm and banquet upon meat of which the world knows not, as they rest beneath the banner of love and are enchanted by celestial music played by unseen hands upon harps of gold. Without further attempt at defining a Christian home we will now look upon two of these homes in the hope of catching their spirit. We will see the first of these homes in the day of its making, then we will turn the dial of time and hear the benediction of half a century pronounced upon it; in the other we will spend a single day when the fruits of a quarter of a century are in full bloom.

In a Sunday morning sermon some years ago I emphasized the importance of setting up the family altar in a new home. At the close of the service a Christian father took my hand and said that he had been much wrought upon by the message. He said it carried him back more than fifty years to the time when he and his wife were married, and with tears in his eyes, told how they started the family altar. On the evening following their marriage, he and his bride went to their new home, a little log house deep in the woods. As the hour grew late, he began to wish for his father; realizing as never before what it means to stand at the head of a home, and be responsible for the standards of that home. The battle being fought was, "Shall I suggest that we have a Scripture lesson and prayer?" He had been reared in a Christian home where family prayer was regularly offered. His mother had presented him with a New Testament

and Psalms. His wife was a Christian, this he knew, but her attitude toward family worship must now be settled. He then told his wife of the custom of the home from which he had come, and asked if their new home was to be a house of prayer. The reply from the bride was, "It will not seem like home to me if we do not have family worship."

He grasped my hand more firmly as he explained how they sat side by side on the puncheon bench, and how the wife held the burning candle near his shoulder as he made the selection and read. Then how, laying the Bible at one end of the bench and placing the candle at the other, they knelt side by side and prayed that God might bless their union, enrich their lives, and help them to serve Him acceptably. "Oh," said he, "I am completely broken up this morning, for I have been thinking those days all over again, and the thought occurred to me, what might have come to me and my family if the devil had gotten the victory that first night. God has been so good to us," he continued, "our family life has been continual sunshine and happiness. I see many changes as I look back over the past; the old candle gave way to the oil lamp, and now the oil lamp has been discarded and our home is equipped with electric lights; but," said he with decided emphasis, "the great change that has taken place between the old tallow candle and our present electric light does not equal in illumination the increased brilliancy of the light that is in my heart. Truly, the Bible has been to me, 'A lamp unto

my feet and a light unto my path.' And with me it is a glorious fact that 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' "

Such a home as this is the joy of all its occupants, the standard of the community, and a bulwark of the nation. It receives the blessing of God, and imparts a blessing to man. From homes like this have come the men and women who have made the history of America worth writing, and those who are to write our future history can have no greater heritage than the holy environment of a consecrated home where character is fostered and manhood is developed.

The other home I would have you see is in central Iowa. A few years ago I was met at a county seat town on a July afternoon and conveyed to this home in the family carriage. As we drove through the beautiful country, the father told me that the following day was to be a holiday in their home. Not understanding how a farmer could have a holiday in mid-summer, I asked him to explain the occasion. He replied, "My boys have worked hard all summer, harvesting is done, threshing has scarcely begun, and the corn needs no further cultivation. My oldest son will be twenty-one years of age to-morrow and we are going to take the day off. I have not made this known to the boys, yet, I thought they would appreciate the surprise.

We reached the home, a beautiful place, where we spent a pleasant evening and had refreshing sleep.

After the morning meal and family worship, the father left the house, crossed the road to the barn, hitched a beautiful horse to the buggy and tied it at the front gate. The boys and I were in the parlor, wondering where he purposed driving. Presently the father stood in the front door and from the eldest son came this question, "Where are you going, father?" This question flooded the father's already full heart. He crossed the floor and taking the son's hand with deep emotion said, "My boy, father is not going anywhere; you are to-day twenty-one years of age; I have gone to the barn and hitched the best horse to the new buggy; they stand at the gate at your disposal. The question is, 'where are you going?'"

Nothing had been said about a holiday, but I saw that it was now on in full blast. The son arose, unable to reply, untied the horse and drove away. In about an hour he returned and placed the horse in the barn. As he came up the walk he appeared the image of his father of an hour before. He paused a moment in the open door and then walked over to his mother, who had entered the parlor during his absence. Kneeling at her side, he buried his face in her lap and sobbed, "Mother, home never looked better to me in all my life than it did when I drove up the lane a bit ago. I cannot express my appreciation of the Christian home you and father have made for me. I have now no thought or plan of leaving such a good home." Whatever else passed between them, the angels alone know, for I stepped in an adjoining room,

believing this to be a scene only to be witnessed by heavenly guests. Of all the holidays, anniversaries or family reunions it has been my privilege to attend, this was by far the most impressive.

Fortunate indeed it was that this young man came to appreciate a Christian home before he went out from it for life. I know the dearest memories with some of you are the scenes and sweet experiences of the old home. How we wish they might be ours again. I went back some years ago to the old farm where I was born and there, beneath the old trees where we used to play and swing, I stood and thought. The man became a child again and the long, weary years became as though they had not been. I heard the lowing herds and the tinkling bells as the tapestry of the evening fell. Once more I seemed to kneel with mother beside the little bed and pray:

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take,
And I ask this for Jesus’ sake, Amen.”

I cried out then as I feel like crying now:

“Backward, turn backward, O time in thy flight,
Make me a child again just for to-night.
Mother, come back from that echoless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore.
In the old cradle I’m longing to creep,
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep.”

III. CONVERTED HOMES.

The transforming of a monarchy into a republic makes a chapter of interesting history and insures the blessings of democracy to every citizen. The conversion of a Christless home into a home of prayer sets the joy bells of Heaven ringing and gives to each member of the family that "peace which passeth understanding" and makes them heirs "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven." The angels never look earthward and behold a more beautiful picture than to see in a former Christless home the now pious father and devout mother with rosy cheeked boys and girls about them as they gather at the close of day around the family altar, where the father reads aloud a chapter from the Living Word and they all kneel in prayer and devotion to God. Let us see one of these homes in its transformation.

I was conducting a meeting in western Oklahoma some years ago and a middle aged man became much interested. On a Sunday morning I emphasized the importance of family worship. He became convicted under this sermon and on Tuesday night of the same week he and his wife were converted. The next day he related the following to me:

"Soon after wife and I were married, the Government opened this strip for settlement, and the race was made to stake out homesteads. I entered the race and secured this claim. In a few weeks I had pre-

pared a little dug-out, and wife and I were happily located in our new home. We have since built a modest two-roomed house, and into our home have come three sweet little girls. A few months ago diphtheria spread through this section and for some time we did not know whether our children would be spared to us or not. As they were in the balance of life and death we tenderly ministered to them, anxiously awaiting the verdict. Victory came and they were all spared. When I heard you preach on 'Religion in the Home,' I became convicted, for I was guilty of a most shameful neglect. After returning home last night from church, wife and I decided to start a family altar. She found the old Bible and the Lord seemed to direct me in selecting an appropriate Scripture. I read a few verses and came to a word which I could not pronounce. I spelled it out and my oldest daughter gave the pronunciation. Just then a sense of shame struck me with such force I can scarcely describe it! To think that the first time I ever read the Bible before my family I had to turn to one of my own children for the pronunciation of difficult words! Had she slapped me in the face, I would not have felt more keenly rebuked. After the reading we had prayer and such a blessing came into our hearts as we had never before experienced. When I came in at noon to-day, I heard singing up at the house such as I had not heard since the early days of our married life. The sweet voice of my wife was giving expression to the joy of her heart. The children were

at play under the shade of a tree, and they were having church. I tell you, I am the happiest man to-day in all this country."

Here was a home which had been without Christ all these years, but when it became a converted home great joy came to the entire household, and in the years since then this family has enjoyed the sweet fellowship of the Holy Spirit and has daily petitioned the blessings of Heaven. I tell you, friends, Longfellow's "Hanging of the Crane," and Bobby Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night," are as sweet in practice as they are in poetry. Can it be that in any of the homes presided over by Christian parents the voice of prayer is never heard? What, my brother! no supplication at night for divine protection, no thanksgiving in the morning for care, and no prayer for direction? How can you hope to escape the judgment of God pronounced in the tenth chapter of Jeremiah in these words: "Pour out thy fury upon the families that call not on thy name." Daniel preferred a night with the lions to a prayerless bed-chamber.

A little girl whose mother was dead met the displeasure of her father by going frequently to the home of a neighbor a short distance down the country lane. He reproved her severely, but still she would go. One day he told her that if she went again he would punish her without mercy. A few days later she was missed and presently he saw her coming from the neighbor's house. He would have no explanation until he had administered the punishment. She then

said, "Papa, I don't want to be a bad girl, but I go down there 'cause they read about Jesus, and you know that mamma has gone to live with Jesus, and I jist get so lonesome to hear about Jesus since mamma ain't here to talk to me about Him; papa, if you'd talk to me about Jesus and read about Jesus and pray to Jesus, then I wouldn't go down there no more."

Oh, parents! when you have departed, to be with your children no more, when the sod is green over your grave and the moss is covering the inscription on your tombstone, will your children be able to remember father and mother at family prayer? Will they find on the margins of the old family Bible finger prints at consoling promises and tears of joy wept by eyes that have closed to the scenes of earth and opened to the splendors of the glory world? I fear that if some of your children ever reach Heaven it will be because someone else read to them about Jesus and talked to them about Jesus and prayed to Jesus with them. If your home is a Christless home in which the voice of prayer is not heard, will you not give me your hand and ask Jesus to help you make it in reality a Christian home?

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- THE GOSPEL PLUMMET
- SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD
- SEVEN WONDERS OF HEAVEN
- SEVEN WONDERS OF HELL
- THE PHILOSOPHY OF FEELING
- THE CALL TO REPENTANCE
- THE GOLDEN HARVEST
- THE WEDDING PRESENT
- FROM FEAST TO FEAST
- THE GATE BEAUTIFUL
- VIRTUE ABOVE RUBIES
- TRAPS OF THE DEVIL

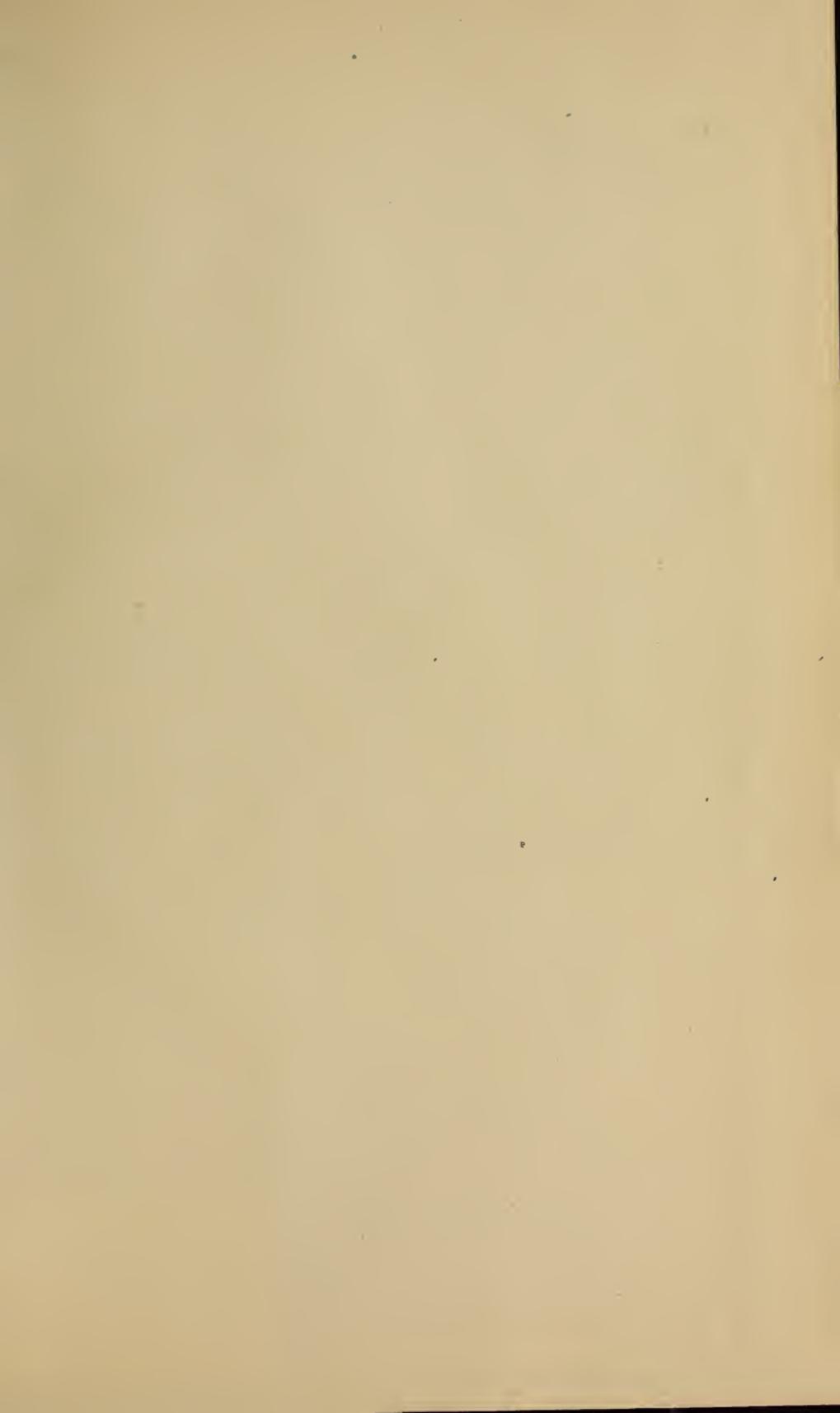
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